# MEN AND MANNERS OF OLD FLORENCE

Photo. Alinari

*Lorenzo dei Medici.*
*From a painting by Vasari.*

# *Men and Manners of Old Florence*

*By* GUIDO BIAGI

*Librarian of the Laurentian and Riccardi Libraries, Florence*

*With Forty-nine Illustrations*

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# PREFACE

THESE five essays, which now appear for the first time collected in book form, do not pretend to be a complete study of the private life of the Florentines in different centuries, but only sketches for a larger picture which I hope some time to be able to execute.

But, although detached, these sketches give realistic glimpses of the social life in Florence from the thirteenth to the beginning of last century; of the times, in short, when she had an individual life and character of her own, and her native manners and customs had not yet been submerged and lost in the great stream of modern influence and fashion.

I should like to state, however, that these essays are founded upon entirely new material and documents which have never hitherto been used, and are in no way merely compiled from the usual hackneyed sources used and abused by most modern writers on Florentine subjects. I may say with Alfred De Musset: "*Mon verre n'est pas grand, mais je bois dans mon verre.*"

GUIDO BIAGI.

FLORENCE, THE LAURENTIAN LIBRARY,
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# CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Florence within her Ancient Boundary . . | 13 |
| The Mind and Manners of a Florentine Merchant of the Fourteenth Century . | 53 |
| The Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines . . . . . | 83 |
| Tullia of Arragon . . . . . | 141 |
| The Twilight of the Past . . . . | 251 |
| Index . . . . . | 315 |

# ILLUSTRATIONS


LORENZO DEI MEDICI. BY VASARI . . . *Frontispiece*
(*Alinari.*)

A VIEW OF FLORENCE IN THE FRESCO OF THE BIGALLO . . . . . *Facing page* 17
(*Alinari.*)

THE WALLS OF FLORENCE . . . . . „ 19
(*From the Chronicles by Villani of the Chigi Library.*)

SAN GIOVANNI . . . . . „ 24
(*From the Chronicles by Villani.*)

WOOL MERCHANTS . . . . . „ 45
(*From a miniature of the Riccardi Library.*)

THE LAMB OF THE WOOL GUILD . . „ 47

THE CORNCHANDLER IN HIS SHOP . . „ 65
(*From an early XIV. Century MS. in the Laurentian Library.*)

A CRAFTSMAN OF THE SILK GUILD . . „ 67
(*From a miniature of the Riccardi Library.*)

A CRAFTSMAN OF THE SILK GUILD . . „ 69
(*From the same MS.*)

SCENE IN CORN MARKET, FLORENCE . . „ 71
(*From an early XIV. Century MS. in the Laurentian Library.*)

THE FRESCO IN THE RESIDENCE OF THE WOOL GUILD, REPRESENTING THE GOOD AND BAD OFFICERS . . . . „ 73

THE CORN MARKET OF OR SAN MICHELE . *Facing page* 75
(*From an early XIV. Century MS. in the Laurentian Library.*)

THE CHURCH OF SANTA REPARATA AND THE CAMPANILE . . . . . „ 77
(*From the same MS., called the "Biadajolo."*)

THE ANCIENT BOUNDARY OF FLORENCE . „ 79
(*From the same MS.*)

THE FRESCO BY CENNINI IN THE PRISON OF THE *STINCHE* . . . . . „ 81
(*Alinari.*)

THE PULPIT OF SAN PIERO SCHERAGGIO, FROM WHICH DANTE ADDRESSED THE PEOPLE . . . . . „ 83
(*Alinari.*)

SAN GIOVANNI, THE CAMPANILE, AND SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE IN A FRESCO OF SANTA CROCE . . . . . „ 85

THE PICTURE BY DOMENICO DI MICHELINO „ 87
(*From an old engraving.*)

OR SAN MICHELE, THE SHRINE BY ORCAGNA „ 89
(*Alinari.*)

THE OLD MARKET . . . . . „ 91
(*From a drawing by Burci. Alinari.*)

THE OLD MARKET BEFORE ITS DEMOLITION „ 93

THE OLD MARKET WITH THE LOGGIA DEL PESCE BY VASARI . . . . . „ 95
(*Alinari.*)

THE DEVIL, BY GIAMBOLOGNA, AT THE CORNER OF THE VECCHIETTI PALACE, IN THE OLD MARKET . . . „ 97
(*Alinari.*)

THE FRESCO OF THE MONASTERY OF LECCETO, SHOWING GAMBLERS AND KEEPERS OF GAMING TABLES . . . . . *Facing page* 98

THE *LOGGIA* OF THE BIGALLO . . . „ 100
(*Alinari.*)

PORTRAIT OF FRANCESCO DATINI . . „ 102
(*Alinari.*)

THE TOMB OF FRANCESCO DATINI IN THE CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO, PRATO . „ 104
(*Alinari.*)

FLORENTINE COSTUMES AT THE TIME OF THE DUKE OF CALABRIA, FROM THE FRESCO BY SIMONE MARTINI, CHAPEL OF THE SPAGNOLI, SANTA MARIA NOVELLA . . . . . „ 107
(*Alinari.*)

THE WEDDING OF BACCIO ADIMARI AND LISA RICASOLI . . . . . „ 126
(*Alinari.*)

THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN THE RUCELLAI CHAPEL, SAN PANCRAZIO . . . „ 129
(*Alinari.*)

THE STROZZI PALACE. BY BENEDETTO DA MAJANO . . . . . „ 139
(*Alinari.*)

SAVONAROLA IN HIS CELL . . . . „ 140

THE SACRISTY OF SAN LORENZO . . „ 142
(*Alinari.*)

TULLIA OF ARRAGON . . . . „ 144
(*Alinari.*)

PIETRO ARETINO. BY TITIAN . . . „ 150
(*Alinari.*)

FILIPPO STROZZI . . . . . *Facing page* 162
(*Alinari.*)

VITTORIA COLONNA. BY MUZIANO . . „ 169
(*Alinari.*)

A COURTESAN. BY PARIS BORDONE . . „ 203
(*Alinari.*)

ELEONORA DI TOLEDO. BY BRONZINO . „ 234
(*Alinari.*)

THE GRAND DUKE FERDINAND III. . . „ 262

THE TOWER OF THE ADIMARI AT THE ENTRANCE OF VIA CALZAJOLI . . „ 265

VIA CALZAJOLI, BEFORE THE ENLARGEMENT „ 267
(*From a contemporary drawing.*)

THE PONTE ALLE GRAZIE BEFORE ITS RESTORATION . . . . . „ 268
(*Alinari.*)

THE *CORSA DEI BARBERI* (A RACE BY BARE-BACKED HORSES). PICTURE BY GIOVANNI SIGNORINI . . . . . „ 270
(*Brogi.*)

A MASQUERADE IN PIAZZA SANTA CROCE . „ 272
(*Alinari.*)

A SCENE OF THE EPIPHANY . . . „ 274
(*Alinari.*)

THE CHARIOT RACE IN THE PIAZZA SANTA MARIA NOVELLA. PICTURE BY GIOVANNI SIGNORINI . . . . . „ 276
(*Alinari.*)

THE FIREWORKS ON THE PONTE ALLA CARRAJA. BY SIGNORINI . . . . „ 278
(*Alinari.*)

THE GRAND DUKE LEOPOLD II. . . . „ 308

FLORENCE WITHIN HER ANCIENT BOUNDARY

# Men and Manners of Old Florence

## FLORENCE WITHIN HER ANCIENT BOUNDARY

### I

IT is not easy for us of the present day to form a clear idea of old Fiorenza as she was when still surrounded by her ancient boundary, to reconstruct the beloved and longed-for image graven upon the heart of him who, during long and weary wanderings and all the sorrowful years of exile, still dwelt in memory in his own lost and distant city.

To go back through the course of centuries is almost like mounting the stream of some mighty river. The tumultuous scenes of modern life are gradually left behind, and in their place we see before us the peaceful vision of a calm and smiling landscape as yet unspoiled by the terrors of civilisation. Higher still, where the stream flows clear and pure, its waters mirror the

solitary shores overgrown with shrubs and reeds, and at last the mighty river becomes a mere brook rippling amongst rocks and stones, between steep banks covered on either side with thick and tangled woods. Who would recognise in that tiny thread of silver water issuing from its far-off source the same muddy, troubled stream which, farther down its course, flows through crowded cities, turning machinery and bearing ships, until, made foul by their contact with human beings, its polluted waters mingle with the sea!

The Florentine landscape of the thirteenth century had none of those lines and colours which now lend such grace to its hills, such brilliant freshness to its plains. If we climb the hill of Fiesole to-day, we look down upon a city which seems built of ivory and stone; the silver streak of the Arno winds westward through the shadowy valley like a dream, and spring-time gives a fresh setting of flowers and leaves to the sun-kissed monuments of her ancient glory. Then, however, the "fair and gay Florentine city, the fount of valour and of joy, the flower of cities, Fiorenza," as she was called by a thirteenth-century poet, Chiaro Davanzati, rose proud and dark and threatening, her hundred and fifty great towers and her battlemented walls surrounded by a moat, against a sombre background of hills not yet brightened by houses and olive gardens, but covered with cypresses, tall and straight as lances, with oak and ash and fir-trees swaying and rustling in the keen tramontana wind. To the north were Monte Morello, l'Uccellatoio and the other spurs

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

A VIEW OF FLORENCE IN THE FRESCO OF THE BIGALLO.

[*To face page* 17.

of the Apennine range, turning to the fury of the wind their sides clothed with those thick woods of pine and fir which, later on, were cut down to provide beams and roofs for the new churches about to be built in the city. The Fiorenza of that time, enclosed within her stone walls, protected by bastions and forts with their countless little towers and spires, seemed like a beautiful woman warrior buckled in her iron armour bristling with sharp points. And only in later times, when the New Age had calmed her war-like spirit and softened the savage beauty of both soul and body, did she show her smiling face to the sun and set free her young limbs from their iron bonds.

* * * * *

The few pictorial representations of that period which are still in existence, such as the frescoes of the Bigallo and the miniatures in the Biadajolo, or the various reconstructions attempted by scholars like Vincenzo Borghini, that sixteenth-century forerunner of modern historical critics, show us the "ancient boundary," or first circle of walls, enclosing a perfect forest of towers, interspersed with the bright red roofs of lofty houses, nearly all of which were furnished with projecting parapets. It is difficult to recognise the Florence we know now in these old pictures, because we find there none of the monuments which make it familiar to our eyes. We miss Santa Maria del Fiore, with its great cupola and its majestic nave, the Campanile rising into the air like some tall palm-tree, and the Palace of the Priori,

surmounted by its proud and slender tower. The Baptistery alone existed then, though it was not yet clothed with marble, and it was the only building amongst all those intended both for defence and defiance, all those houses which were more like strongholds than private dwellings, to be saved and destined for a nobler fate.

* * * * *

The descriptions left by old chroniclers and confirmed by recent excavations enable us to determine the site of the ancient walls with absolute certainty. The moat and wall, which together formed the city boundary, ran on the eastern side from the Castello d'Altafronte, where is now the Piazza dei Giudici, to San Firenze and the Badia and up the Via del Proconsolo, forming an angle on the northern side of the Piazza del Duomo, opposite to the modern Cathedral Museum. Thence it went in a straight line past the Baptistery and the Archbishop's house, along the present Via dei Cerretani. Near the corner of the Via Rondinelli the moat joined the Mugnone river, which then took its place, and flowing past San Michele Berteldi, now San Gaetano, and the houses of the Tornaquinci, afterwards called Tornabuoni, it emptied itself into the Arno at the point where the Santa Trinita bridge was subsequently erected. On the south side the walls followed the site of the Via delle Terme as far as Por Santa Maria, and from the corner of the present Via Lambertesca they continued behind the church of San

THE WALLS OF FLORENCE.

(*From the* Chronicles *by Villani of the Chigi Library.*)

[*To face page* 19.

Piero Scheraggio, which stood where is now the entrance to the Uffizi Gallery. That part of the moat was named Scheraggio and it collected all the rain-water of the city and carried it to the Arno.

Giovanni Villani wrote that Florence possessed good walls with towers at frequent intervals, and four principal gates. These were the Porta San Piero, at the point where the Corso joins the Via del Proconsolo; the Porta del Duomo (or San Giovanni), in earlier times called the Bishop's Gate, opposite the end of the Borgo San Lorenzo; the Porta San Brancazio, at the junction of streets near the Strozzi Palace; and finally the Porta Santa Maria, which stood opposite the earliest bridge, built "upon stone piles sunk in the Arno," and eventually called the Old Bridge, or Ponte Vecchio, after the construction of the new bridge, or Ponte alla Carraia. Each gate had a secondary or outer gate, enclosed within battlemented walls, the space in between being a courtyard, which spanned the moat supported on two arches. The lateral towers were of two storeys, surmounted by machicolated platforms and having loopholes through which stones could be hurled at the enemy, or boiling liquid and burning rubbish dropped upon his head.

The surrounding country was then of singular aspect. Beyond the Arno, San Miniato turned its glistening marble façade towards the sunset, but there were no smiling villas and gardens to keep it company as there are to-day. Here and there were

poor huts and cabins, inhabited by peasants and labourers, with occasionally walled enclosures or fortified farmhouses, wherein men, cattle and provisions were protected against hostile raids. In those days everything was devised for the safety of persons and property, for robbery and murder were looked upon as ever-present and inevitable dangers.

Towards the middle of the thirteenth century, however, when populous suburbs had sprung up outside each gate, beyond the first circle of walls, and churches and public buildings stood where were formerly only bare fields, the second circle of walls was erected to enclose and protect these new quarters, as happens in every case of town extension. The principal enlargement of the city took place on the south side of the Arno, with the enclosure of the three populous suburbs whose chief streets meet at the end of the present Ponte Vecchio. These were the Borgo Pidiglioso, which extended as far as Santa Lucia de Magnoli and was inhabited by poor and dirty people; the Borgo Santa Felicita, otherwise called the Borgo di Piazza, and the Borgo di San Jacopo, which had a gate near the houses where afterwards dwelt the Frescobaldi family. Thus the new city of Florence on the right side of the Arno possessed five gates, one for each of the five districts, beside several small postern gates, of which I will only mention the names. On the east was the Porta di San Pier Maggiore. On the north side was the Porta degli Albertinelli, at the present entrance to

the Borgo Pinti ; the Porta di Balla, where is now San Michelino, and the Porta di San Lorenzo, at the corner of the present Via dei Ginori. On the western side were the small gates called Campo Corbolino, del Baschiera and del Trebbio, and the Porta di San Paolo at the entrance to Via Palazzuolo. The walls, not very high on the river side, now enclosed within the boundary the suburbs of San Brancazio, Parione, Santo Apostolo, and Santa Maria as far as the bridge, and continued along the river-bank as far as the Castello d'Altafronte. At this point they left the side of the Arno and turned northward at the Rubaconte Bridge, now called Ponte alla Grazie, towards the corner of the Colonnine, where stood the Porta dei Buoi, or Cattle Gate, so called because the cattle market was held just outside it. This name was subsequently changed to that of the Porta da Messer Ruggero da Quona, however, when the da Quona family took up their residence in the dwelling which was situated over the gateway. The walls then continued behind San Jacopo tra' Fossi to the open square in front of the Franciscan church of Santa Croce, where a small gate gave access to the Arno island, and thence ran in a straight line, without either gate or postern, to San Pier Maggiore.

## II

SUCH, then, was the Fiorenza of the times of Cacciaguida and Dante, the city whose manners and customs I shall endeavour to describe in as few words as possible, giving you brief glimpses into that life so remote from our present thoughts, although sung and glorified in many an immortal verse.

I will spare you further topographical details, which are only interesting to the Florentines themselves, and more especially to those who witnessed the demolition of the third circle of walls, when the Italian capital was moved from Turin to Florence on its way to its legendary and historical site in Rome, and the voices of the National Parliament echoed in that Hall of the Cinquecento which for more than three centuries had not heard united the words King, People and Liberty.

Let us imagine ourselves entering Florence on some fair spring morning during the second half of the thirteenth century. We arrive on foot or on horseback, and having passed through the outlying suburbs, composed of modest houses and cabins which line the roads outside each gate, we come to the

Porta del Vescovo, where the watchful guards, jingling their rusty keys, cry loudly to the wayfarer, "Who art thou? Hast thou nought in thy purse?" Having given that reply which in all ages succeeds in opening gates and taming Cerberus, we cross the moat, pass through the second gateway, and are greeted by the sound of bells as we enter the city just waking to its daily work. From each church and chapel the bells are pealing gaily, and not only from the towers and belfries, but from every arch and niche and window where they can be hung. There are more than eighty of them, and at their persistent call the narrow, tortuous streets below begin to show signs of animation. At the massive doorways of the high houses appear the pale and wary faces of the merchants, who dare not issue forth until they hear that the neighbours and tradesmen are also throwing open their houses and shops; then upon the threshold they say a short prayer, make the sign of the cross, and betake themselves to church.

The streets gradually fill with people. Here are clergy in great numbers, monks and nuns, pilgrims and lay sisters; here are peasants coming in from the country with their donkey-carts laden with vegetables; knights in armour striding along proudly and impatiently, as though they were lords of all; rough artisans and workmen singing as they urge on their asses by force of kicks and cries; jesters and wandering players go about seeking some good-natured temporary host; fruit-sellers and market-

women, carrying their swaddled babies slung at their backs, exercise their tongues over other people's affairs as they trundle along to their stalls, whilst armed men belonging to some of the great houses make their way through the increasing crowd with grim and threatening faces, their hands ready to draw sword or dagger from its sheath. Opposite to the Bishop's Palace—an elaborate building conspicuous for its *loggia*, or covered terrace, then perhaps the only one in the city—was the *atrium* and entrance to the Baptistery of San Giovanni; the church itself was surrounded by arches, partly of marble and partly of stone, beneath which idlers and ragged philosophers of all sorts were accustomed to congregate. The porphyry columns and the pillar commemorating the dead tree which blossomed anew at the funeral of San Zanobius were in the same places where they are seen to-day, but between the Baptistery and the church of Santa Reparata, to the left of which was a tower, stood the Hospital of St. John the Evangelist, a refuge for the poor and for pilgrims.

The people crowded into the narrow spaces between these various buildings and overflowed into the churchyard of Santa Reparata, ground afterwards covered by the great transepts of Santa Maria del Fiore. Their business and their gossip was mostly carried on in the Mercato Vecchio, the old market-place which possessed "four churches at its four corners," amongst the labyrinth of lanes and alleys round Or San Michele, in the Piazza del Comune,

SAN GIOVANNI.

(*From the* Chronicles *by Villani of the Chigi Library.*)

[*To face page* 24.

which had then not yet been enlarged by extension over the ruins of the Uberti dwellings, or in the open place in front of the Ponte Vecchio, which was used as a market for fruit and vegetables. Here the good people who sat comfortably upon the benches and stone seats listened eagerly to the tales and jokes of the professional jesters and buffoons, to the hair-raising accounts of crime committed in the city, or to the dreadful threats and prophecies of some friar or hermit just returned from the Holy Land ; but even if these conversations could be repeated, the meaning and the witticisms would in most cases be incomprehensible to our modern minds. The old men recalled events of their youth ; they described floods so terrible that the swollen Arno overflowed its banks and turned the city into a lake, causing widespread ruin and the deaths of many persons by drowning. Besides this feared and constantly recurring disaster, there were the fires which had several times destroyed Florence, and which were due partly to the carelessness of the inhabitants and the great amount of inflammable material collected within a confined space, and partly to the malice and revenge of the various parties and factions. These conflagrations claimed many victims ; whole families perished together and a great deal of property, valuable furniture and precious things were lost. Wherefore the sage advisers of the day were constantly reminding the people to take all precautions against fire and to have a way of escape ready from doors, windows,

or roof in case of a blaze in the house. There were also the robberies committed by the armed adherents or servants of certain families, who sallied forth at night with a banner bearing their master's arms and an escort of foot-soldiers, and broke into houses, carrying off everything, even to the garments and bedclothes of the household and "leaving the children, both male and female, naked upon their bedsteads; worse things were not done even in Acre by the Saracens." These attacks, moreover, were arranged beforehand, for it is related how certain persons previously went about to all the threatened houses, warning the women and "offering to take charge of and keep safely anything which they might desire to place in security during the time of danger then about to begin. But when once these ruffians had got hold of the property they gave very little of it back to the owners, and only replied with threats to those who demanded the restoration of their ill-gotten gains.

These melancholy tales, however, were often varied by more cheerful memories. The gossips would tell of the merry discussions held in lordly assemblies where the guests passed their time in listening to jests and entertaining stories, and where the jesters and story-tellers who were engaged to provide the amusement sometimes failed to please and were maltreated in consequence. Repartee and witty remarks were permitted to inferiors, even to the servants who waited at table.

"A company of knights was once supping in one

of the great Florentine houses, and there was present a jester who was a most excellent story-teller. When the supper was finished he began a tale which seemed as though it would never end. A youth belonging to the house, who was serving the company and was probably hungry for his own supper, called him by name and said—

"'He who taught thee that tale did not teach thee all.'

"'How so?' asked the jester.

"And the youth replied, 'Because he did not teach thee the end.'"

Those who made it their business to spread city gossip took less delight in witty sayings, however, than in the practical jokes played upon countrymen and persons of feeble mind. They described a trick played by the shop-boys of a jacket maker upon a peasant (peasants were popularly called *martori*, or martyrs) who had come into Florence to buy himself a jacket, or smock.

"He entered a shop and asked for the master. He was not there. Said an apprentice, 'I am the master; what desirest thou?'

"'I want a smock,' said the peasant.

"The apprentice found one suitable, and the peasant tried it on and inquired the price. The poor man did not, however, possess a quarter of the sum, so was bidden to draw off the smock. Now in pretending to try on the smock and arrange it about the man's legs, the apprentice had secretly fastened

it to his shirt, so that when the peasant drew off the smock he drew off his shirt with it and stood there naked. The other apprentices were ready with their straps, and the peasant was whipped and mocked at throughout all the country side."

Even the priests never dreamt of treating the country people as Christians. "A peasant went to confession one day, and having taken some holy water, he saw the priest busy in the orchard. He called to him and said :

"'Oh, sir, I desire to make confession.'

"'Didst thou confess last year?' asked the priest.

"The man answered that he had done so.

"'Then,' said the worthy cleric, 'put a penny in the box and consider that I have granted thee the same forgiveness this year as I did last.'"

Those who were stupid or dull-witted had to take the consequences, beside being the victims of practical jokes, as was the case with Ser Frulli, an old man who owned a fine farm on the hill of San Giorgio, and lived there with his family almost all the year round. Every morning he used to send his servant to sell fruit and vegetables in the square near the bridge, and he was so miserly and distrustful that he tied up the bundles of vegetables himself, counted them, and told the girl how much money he expected her to bring back. The chief injunction he laid upon her, however, was that she must never dawdle in the street of San Giorgio, because the women there were thieves. Now there was a Florentine named Bito,

who lived in the quarter of San Giorgio and was noted for his amusing tricks, one of which he determined to play on Ser Frulli. He put on a rich, fur-trimmed dress, the best he had, and sat down on the seat outside his own door. When the servant came by with a basket of cabbages he called her, and she went up to him immediately, although she had paid no attention to several women who had previously offered to buy from her.

"Good woman, how much do these cabbages cost?" asked Bito.

"Messere, two bundles for a penny."

"Certainly this is a good portion. But seeing that all my family is away in the country and that I am alone here with my servant, a whole portion would be too much for me. Moreover, I prefer to eat my vegetables whilst they are fresh."

At that time small medals were in current use in Florence, two medals being worth a penny; wherefore Bito said:

"Give me a medal's worth. Now then, give thou me a penny and I give thee a medal, and another day will I take the second bundle."

The girl thought it was all right and did as she was told; then she went on and sold the remainder of her vegetables at the price fixed by her master. When she returned home she handed the money to Ser Frulli, who immediately counted it over and found it a penny short. He questioned the girl, but she replied that it was impossible; the money was

correct. Thereupon he grew angry with her and asked her if she had stopped anywhere in San Giorgio. At first she tried to deny it, but her master frightened her so much that she admitted it and said :

" Yes, I stopped and sold to a fair knight and he paid me well. Moreover, he bade me bring him another bundle of cabbages."

" Then we have lost half a penny," answered Ser Frulli.

He thought over the matter and presently perceived the trick, whereupon he began to abuse the servant roundly and asked where the man lived to whom she had sold the cabbages. She described the house, and then he knew that it was Bito, who had already played him a number of tricks. He was furious, and the next morning he got up early, hid a rusty sword under his cloak and went to the square by the bridge, where he found Bito sitting with a number of other people. Ser Frulli drew his sword and would have wounded Bito if another man had not immediately seized him by the arms ; and the people all drew back in alarm, thinking there was going to be an uproar. Bito was frightened at first, but then, remembering what had happened, he began to laugh. Thereupon the people surrounded Ser Frulli and asked what was the matter, and he described the whole affair, though he was so breathless he could scarcely speak. Bito called for silence, however, and said :

" Ser Frulli, I will make terms with you ; let us

have no more words. Give me back my penny and take your medal, and ye may also have your cabbages, and a curse go with them ! "

Ser Frulli answered, " It is well, and if ye had spoken thus at the first, all this trouble would never have been."

And not perceiving the fresh trick, he gave back the penny and received a medal in exchange and departed quite content, amidst great laughter from the crowd.

## III

THERE was probably no material difference between these rough and simple people, who were so easily deceived even when they imagined themselves very sharp, and those earlier Florentines, the contemporaries of Cacciaguida, so greatly extolled by Dante. In every age it happens that the countryman who moves into the city and becomes a town dweller is anxious to conceal his origin, and therefore speaks scornfully of his companions of yesterday. Fiorenza had conquered and subjugated the surrounding country, compelling the nobles who owned or ruled the land to come within the city, where their overbearing pride sowed the seed of those discords which presently divided it into opposing factions. Meanwhile, however, in the midst of political discord there was ripening that social revolution which was destined to place the government of public affairs in the hands of the people and the guilds, to change the feudal and agricultural city into a city of merchants, of craftsmen, and of bankers, and to give the hegemony of the republic, with all its natural and legitimate consequences, to the Guild of Wool and the merchants of the Calimala.

For this phenomenon of attraction towards the city, which in a few years so marvellously altered the appearance of Fiorenza (the spread of buildings being no more than the outward sign and effect of the social change), Dante possessed neither sympathy nor understanding. To quote the words of Carducci: "In the rapid extension of the Commune he beheld only anarchy; in the exuberance of economic and commercial life he saw nothing but corruption; in the striving of the plebs for the conquest of political rights he only saw repulsive peasants of Aguglione or of Signa, the sons of beggars who once implored alms in Semifonte, but who now shut the gates of his native town in the face of him who, born of pure Roman blood, had been obliged, out of love for his country, to inscribe himself in the Guild of the Apothecaries." For this reason the words he puts into the mouth of Cacciaguida in praise of the simple and dignified life of the good old times, and his furious invectives against the shameless Florentine women because they followed the new customs (fashions had not yet been invented) and wore dresses exposing their neck and shoulders, appear rather as opportune subjects for two magnificent outbursts of poetry than serious and impartial documents of historical truth. Paraphrasing the poet, Giovanni Villani wrote: "The citizens of Florence lived soberly and upon coarse food, spending but little money, and in their manners and customs were rough and rude. They dressed both themselves and their wives in coarse cloth, many

of the men going bare-legged without hose, and they all wore caps on their heads and boots on their feet. The Florentine women wore shoes without any ornaments, and most of them dressed in a narrow petticoat of the rough scarlet cloth of Ypres or Cam, with a belt and buckle in the ancient fashion, and a mantle lined with vaire, having a hood which they drew over their heads. The women of the lower orders wore the coarse green cloth of Cambrai made after the same manner. One hundred lire was the usual dowry given with a wife, and two or three hundred was considered magnificent at that time, and the maidens were usually twenty years old or more when they were married. Such were the garments and customs of the Florentines of those days; but they were of good faith and loyal unto each other and to the Commune, and, in spite of their rude life and their poverty, they achieved greater and more important things than are done in our times with more civilisation and more wealth."

Even the chronicler is under the fascination of that immortal poem, of which his own feeble prose is but a faint and distant echo. It is, however, the historian's duty to investigate whether, in Cacciaguida's indictment, justice was not subordinated to sentiment, and whether all the censures of the social life of his fellow-citizens which Alighieri uttered through his lips were well-founded and deserved, or whether they were not rather inspired by that love of old things which resents all innovations it

does not understand and the usefulness of which it cannot foresee.

Profiting by the results of recent learned researches —especially of those made by the latest historian of Florence, Dr. Robert Davidsohn—and also by the records of ancient and trustworthy, if perhaps obscure, witnesses, let us look more closely into the details of social life during the time when the first and second circle of walls were as frames for that picture of ancient Florence drawn for us in the sixteenth canto of the *Paradise*, by the masterly hand of that proud conservative of the White faction.

## IV

PASSING through the streets heaped up with filth, crowded with domestic animals of every description, and often flooded with water from dye-works and tanneries or with the blood of slaughtered beasts, let us penetrate into the family circle and note the manners and customs prevailing at that time.

First of all it must be mentioned that all baptisms, even those from the suburbs, took place at the Baptistery of San Giovanni, and for every male child baptized there the priest put a black bean in a box kept for the purpose, and a white bean for every female, and in this way they kept count of all the births which occurred in the entire district. Brides always brought a dowry with them, which sometimes amounted to a substantial sum, and on the morning after the wedding the bridegroom presented the bride with the *morgincap*, or morning gift, which was fixed at fifty lire, or half the amount of the dowry when the latter was less than one hundred lire. In Florentine marriages they still followed the old Roman custom of giving the ring at the betrothal ceremony,

and not at the celebration before the priest. The father, or guardian, took the bride by the right hand and formally presented her to the bridegroom as his legitimate consort, the bridegroom at the same time placing the ring upon her finger. It was the custom for the bridegroom to give the father, or guardian, a fur coat, usually of wolf-skin. The dowries increased steadily in value with the increase of public prosperity and the greater refinement of manners. Of sixty-six dowries noted between the years 1276 and 1316, ten were of sums from fifty to two hundred lire, fourteen were of sums from two hundred to five hundred, fifteen were from five hundred to seven hundred, thirteen were from seven hundred to twelve hundred, whilst six dowries were of sums of from one hundred to three hundred florins, and eight were from three hundred to five hundred florins. And amongst those "splendid" dowries of two hundred lire was the one (oh, the irony of it!) brought by Gemma, daughter of Manetto Donati, to Dante Alighieri himself!

In course of time, marriages, with their characteristic customs which it would take too long to describe here, became occasions for the display of wealth and luxury—to such an extent, in fact, that in the fourteenth century it became necessary to draw up strict rules for regulating the expenditure. It was the same thing with funerals, which, after the lapse of so many centuries, preserve even to the present day in Florence much of their ancient theatrical display. Preparations

for a funeral necessitated sweeping the street in front of the house whence it was to start, in order that benches might be placed round the door for the convenience of those attending the ceremony, and also to mark the house of mourning. The corpse was washed with hot water, usually perfumed with aromatic herbs and essences, and if the deceased belonged to one of the great families his death was announced by the public crier, who also named the street and house where he had died. The funeral took place the day following the death, and the body was generally carried on the shoulders of persons of its own rank, friends, neighbours, or relatives, who carried out all the last offices for the dead. Around the bier were gathered the women of the family, weeping aloud, with dishevelled hair, torn garments, and all the outward signs of real or feigned despair. Then followed the men, relatives, friends, or neighbours, who bore the dead to his parish church or to that wherein he had desired to be interred. The sad procession, which set out at the hour after sunset, was preceded and accompanied by the lugubrious tolling of the bells in the neighbourhood and lighted by lanterns, torches and candles, while psalms and dirges were chanted as it passed through the streets and squares to which, then as now, such a spectacle drew curious crowds. Houses where a death had taken place remained empty and widows went to live with their own families. For the good of the soul of the defunct, bread and other eatables were dis-

tributed to the poor, and amongst the rich and liberal this act of charity was repeated on each anniversary of the death.

The strictness and sobriety of the domestic life was still a relic of earlier simplicity. Although the high-priestess of the household, the woman was in subjection to the man and had but a small share in the government of the family. The man, the husband, the father, was supreme ruler, even keeping the keys of the street-door and of the money-box under his pillow at night. Inventories found amongst the archives show how poor in hangings, furniture and domestic implements were the dwellings of even the wealthiest families, and how hard and comfortless life must have been in those days. Nevertheless, side by side with this lack of the most necessary things, we find in the more noble and important houses great displays of gold and silver, of chiselled cups and salvers, precious stones, and valuable stuffs for making curtains to the wide beds wherein several persons often slept together, naked and without nightclothes, according to the custom of the time, although on the other hand the finest linen was spread on the tables laid out for the sumptuous banquets. There were two meals in the day: the *comestio* in the morning, not later than half-past eleven, and the *prandium*, or supper, about four o'clock in the afternoon. As in country places to-day, bread was the chief article of food, and they used to flavour it with olive oil or make it into soup mixed with vegetables. Broths

and maccaroni were also generally eaten, and as a relish with the bread, a slice of fat was considered a delicacy. Pork and game were luxuries for the wealthy, or only to be eaten on occasions of great solemnity, and the common fare consisted chiefly of beans, chestnuts, and messes made of millet flour. Those strong stomachs enjoyed highly spiced dishes, but very little wine was drunk at meals. There were no plates, so wooden trenchers were used, one trencher serving for two persons; and as forks were reserved for the use of the cooks and carvers, the guests used their fingers, washing them both before and after meals.

That austere morality, however, which the upholders of the superiority of ancient times are always quoting as an example to later generations, in no wise corresponded with the simple, even uncivilised, ways of outward life. In fact, there was a considerable amount of liberty in moral matters, if we are to believe Rustico di Filippo, commonly called Barbato, who was born in Florence about the year 1230, and who drew with coarse but biting humour such portraits as those of Madonna Leonessa, Madonna Tana, the youthful Chierma, Ser Pepo, the follower of women, Muscia, who addressed a curious list of his own virtues to women in general, and the sharp-witted wife of Aldobrandino who wanted to give back his shirt to the elegant youth Pilletto, because "Thou must never believe all that thou hearest."

A sad proof of the immorality of those times is

afforded by the large number of illegitimate children, whose names are recorded and who shared in the patrimony of the family, and who, moreover, saw no shame in the fact that they were bastards. Thus the son of a certain *Marriguardus* was not afraid to call himself *Bastardinus*, and in the domestic chronicles of a later date we find the offspring of unlawful connections received into the household and treated as legitimate children. This was not all: early in the thirteenth century the Florentine Boncompagno compiled a large book of model letters, entitled *Rota Veneris*, which might be interpreted as *The Gallant Letter-Writer* and which contained various specimens for the use of amorous nuns! The licentiousness so vividly portrayed in the sonnets of Rustico di Filippo and other poetical writers was well matched by the love of luxury and ornament for which Dante afterwards so bitterly reproached the Florentine women, and which was only restrained by the sumptuary laws which the merchant husbands forced the Commune to promulgate. The respective wives of Bellincion Berti, of the Nerli, and the Vecchietti, who are quoted as bright examples by the poet, must have honestly deserved this supreme honour, for he does not mention any other women as possessing equal modesty.

The desire to modify or supplement nature by means of art is so ancient and so true to human weakness that for any one to abstain from so doing must be looked upon as a genuine proof of saintliness,

or else as mere hypocrisy. Even so early as the first half of the eleventh century, Pier Damiani wrote to a matron saying that, notwithstanding his advanced age, he looked with no favour on women who painted their faces and wore too many ornaments, and moreover he suspected a certain hermit of simulating with ointment or paint the interesting pallor of the ascetic. Boncompagno relates that even the young men spent much time with their combs and mirrors, and imitated the women in painting their faces white. The use of cosmetics and wigs even in the Fiorenza of the ancient boundary has been amply proved, and if the men wore horsehair to conceal their baldness, the women made use of it for various other purposes, and also wore wigs made of hair cut from the heads of corpses. The style of dress and the ideal of feminine beauty which we see represented by the slender figures and haggard faces in the frescoes and illuminations of that time are ridiculed in two curious sonnets by this same Rustico, wherein he scoffs at the fashion of procuring a thin, indeed almost emaciated body by all kinds of methods, from the tight-lacing which Cavalcanti admired in Mandetta of Toulouse to the starvation practised by Nita of Florence, who was assisted in her folly by her mother Donna Filippa and a relative named Donna Gemma.

"Haste, Donna Gemma, bring the flour,
Bring rare good wine and eggs new laid!
For Nita's teeth are set on edge,
And her to eat ye must persuade!

Mark ye not how thin she is grown?
All persons marvel when they see;
On Donna Filippa blame is thrown
By friends and kindred constantly.
So light the fire and quickly fry
Some dish, of which she now must eat;
Else sure of hunger she will die.
Her petticoat that was so tight
Would now make two, as ye perceive,
So thin she is become and slight."

The second sonnet continues in the same strain; the writer insists that the women should make her some "good tarts," and inquires the reason why she has lost her appetite, when but a short time before she "did not keep her hands beneath the table" when there was a question of anything to eat.

Fashion now began to dominate dress, and it is not surprising to read in Simone della Tosa that in the Lent of 1275, "by order of the Pope the women were deprived of their pearls and of certain ornaments made of birds, and were forbidden to wear gold and silver fringes, and their garments were not to drag behind for more than half a *braccio*"; that is to say, they were not to wear trains more than half a *braccio* long.

It is difficult to say which of the two vices was the worst—the luxury of the women or the unbridled love of gambling which degraded the men. *Zara*, a game so well known and widespread that Dante drew an admirable parable from it, and *biscaca* were the causes of great losses, angry words, and lawsuits.

Boncompagno tells how he dissuaded a girl from listening to the flatteries of a youth who had gambled away all he possessed and had been reduced to a state of destitution in a few days through the game of *zara* alone. The gambling mania was so universal that in 1203 the servants of the Countess Guerriera, the daughter of Valdrada, who was making a long stay at the Convent of the nuns of Rosano, spent their whole time in throwing the dice. There was gambling during the war between Siena and Florence, and fifty years afterwards a witness remembered having seen the soldiers more intent upon their dice than upon their arms.

It is not to be supposed that the good folk of olden days were not fond of a little amusement to distract their minds from the hardships of daily life, the dangers to which they were constantly exposed, the frequent brawls, and the fears of the world to come. Even at the time when only the first walls existed, professional players and jesters were well received and were always sure of a hearty welcome and a place at the well-spread table. Musicians and singers performed on the harp, viola, lyre, guitar, or on an instrument similar to the latter, called the *rota*, and these airs, songs, and refrains, crude at first, gradually acquired more grace of form and elegance of execution with the increasing refinement of art. This was seen later on when, in the fragrant Maytime of 1283, for the celebration of the Feast of St. John there was formed in the district of Santa

WOOL MERCHANTS.

*(From a miniature of the Riccardi Library.)*

[*To face page* 45.

Felicita a company numbering over a thousand men, all dressed in white and led by one who was called the Lord of Love. The sole aim of this company was the pursuit of pleasure ; they organised games, amusements, and dances in which ladies and knights, and even the lower people, took part ; they paraded the town "blowing trumpets and other instruments in the joy of their hearts, and feasted together at banquets, dinners and suppers." The description might almost fit one of those scenes which were afterwards painted on the great chests wherein brides carried their clothes to their new homes, scenes where, in the words of the poet Folgore of San Geminiano,

> ". . . spears shall split, and fruit go flying up
> In merry counterchange for wreaths that drop
> From balconies and casements far above ;
> And tender damsels with young men and youths
> Shall kiss together on the cheeks and mouths ;
> And every day be glad with joyful love." [1]

It was during this May in Florence that the youthful Dante is said to have composed the beautiful ballad in which he says that the remembrance of a garland he had once seen presented to a lady causes him to sigh at the sight of any flower.

To return to the subject of the ancient companies, however. These were associations formed solely for

[1] Translation by D. G. Rossetti.

pleasure, possessing rules in the Italian tongue and properly drawn up by notaries, and they were called the companies of the Falcons, the Lions, the Round Table, and so forth.

Being situated upon the high-road which led from the north to Rome and passed over the Arno bridge, Florence was of necessity visited by great numbers of strangers. In order to accommodate the pilgrims and wayfarers from overseas and beyond the Alps, almost every church and convent had a hospice attached to it; there were, however, numerous genuine inns and taverns, of which the earliest mention is found in a document of the year 1065.

It was assuredly to their frequent contact with strangers that the Florentines owed that spirit of adventure which impelled them to leave their own country in search of wealth and fortune and taught them how to become daring speculators and usurers. They had no fear of long journeys; for the sake of going to France they left their wives alone at home, and from the foreign land, where the Italian colony formed a corporation governed by a captain-general elected by itself, they exported to their native land wool and rough cloths, which they then subsequently re-imported, dyed and dressed with that perfection of which Calimala [1] jealously held the secret. France was the America, the California of those times, and whoever returned thence with a

[1] The street chiefly inhabited by wool merchants.

THE LAMB OF THE WOOL GUILD.

[*To face page* 47.

full purse put on airs of great pride, like that Neri Picciolino described by Cecco Angiolieri :—

"When Neri Picciolin came back from France
He was so full of florins and pride
That he looked upon men as poor little mice,
And each he did mock and deride.
He frequently cried, 'Now may evil befall
All my neighbours, for seen face to face
With me, they appear but so mean and so small
That their friendship will bring me disgrace.'
Soon this conduct was cause, I have heard,
That no neighbour, howe'er mean and low,
But scorned to speak him a word.
And I'll wager my heart for a crown
That before eight months had gone by,
He'd have thanked for a crust flung him down."

The industry in textile fabrics, which was said to have been introduced by the Umiliati friars, existed since the year 1062 ; and a very profitable industry it must always have been, if even in the thirteenth century Florence bore the reputation of being one of the principal centres.

Beside the wool trade, whose Guild statutes prove the importance of that corporation and whose sign, a lamb, was as well known as the lily of the city, the prosperity of the citizens was largely due to the *Arte del Cambio*, or the Exchange ; for Florentine money-lenders and bankers were dispersed throughout the whole world, practising their lucrative trade of lending and changing money, and, moreover, with such conditions and interest as to cause themselves to be anathematised

by preachers and condemned by the Church. Usury was not only a vice practised by the laity, but by the clergy as well. It is on record that between the years 1016 and 1210, in thirty Florentine loan banks (of which two were kept by priests and three by convents), the usual interest varied from 14½ to 25 per cent. Interest at 25 per cent. eventually became the customary rate, although sometimes 30, 45, 50, and even 66½ per cent. was charged at that period. Florence was the great market where every kind of money was current, which fact alone gives some idea of the extent of her traffic. Beside the *solidus* worth twelve *denari*, or pence, and the *libra* worth twenty *soldi*, a variety of foreign money was current in the market; there was the German *imperiali*, there was Turkish money, there was the local coinage of the counts of that land of Champagne whither Florentines flocked several times a year to attend the famous fairs, there were English sovereigns, and the special currency of the towns of Tours and Bologna, and the gold coins of the Greek Empire called *byzants*, or *byzantines*.

Far from excluding culture, commerce did much to promote it, and we find reassuring proofs of the studies pursued in Florence at that period. As early as the first half of the twelfth century there was a law school, and early in the thirteenth century there were schools of the liberal arts situated near the Canonry. Even what is now called elementary instruction was not entirely neglected, for in many

contracts where the autograph signature is missing, the reason for the omission is stated to be weakness of sight or some other defect, but never ignorance. For women the case was different, however, especially for those of the noble orders. In 1067 Gisla dei Firidolfi declared that she was unable to sign her name because she was a "wealthy and noble matron," and she did not learn to write even when she became abbess of San Pier Maggiore.

Meanwhile the Tuscan idiom, the beautiful language of the people, had been growing gradually purer and more definite, freeing itself from its Germanic elements and its Latin form. The childish folk-songs and snatches learnt from the wandering singers were only the forerunners of the popular subjects alluded to by Dioneo in the fifth day of the *Decameron*, and the Florentine mothers were already elaborating those legends of the "Trojans of Fiesole and of Rome" and of the Knights of the Round Table which were afterwards taken down in writing. Documents and legal parchments of that day contain names and surnames which are distinctly Italian. In 1105 a certain *Fiorentino* is mentioned as husband of a lady named *Italia*, with whom he lived according to the Longobardic law, and amongst other papers are found such names as Piccolino, Malabranca, Malipiedi, Sordo, Cieco, Boccaccio, Occhio di Ferro, Bracciaforte, Grullo, Trincavino, Malandrino, Scandalizzo, Cantapoco, Buongiorno, and other similar appellations descriptive of the persons who bore them.

The most curious thing, however, is to find certain peculiarities and certain defects of the modern Florentine tongue reproduced in these ancient documents as though in a phonograph, defects such as the common ones of aspirating the *c* and changing the *l* into an *r*. The Florentines of the year 1000 also pronounced *Sihelmus*, *Mihael*, *vohatus* and *Marregolatus* for *Malregolatus*, *vocatus*, *Micael* and *Sichelmus*, whence we must conclude that the vice is so ancient that it is useless to hope it will ever be corrected!

* * * * *

Of those strong figures who, by reason of their fiery passions or ardent spirits, stand forth prominently in the pages of the domestic chronicles, I have elsewhere in this volume given some idea in types like Buonaccorso di Piero or Paolo di Ser Pace di Certaldo. Therefore it is not my purpose here to give any fuller account of the "ancient people" of Florence, that strong race, sober, enduring, strict and rude, which struggled successfully through those times of storm and stress. Nor shall I describe their politics, the eternal conflicts between Guelph and Ghibelline, or the disaster which overtook the latter when they attempted to carry out Farinata's fierce proposal to "wipe out Florence," or even try to tell how the new Government was formed with that Guelph party which was a State within the State and which led eventually to the popular form of government under the *Priori* of the various Guilds.

All this belongs to the external history of Florence, which is wholly made up of wars and peace-makings, of strife between princes, families, and people, with the periodical descents upon the city of Imperial envoys and the intervention of Papal pacificators. Concerning all these things many learned volumes have been written, wherein, however, to speak frankly, we have none of us found that which forms the true, the irresistible attraction of the past, that romance of life lived, those facts and details which, in a single sentence or anecdote, explain the secret of a whole age or people better than do all the pages historians and philosophers ever wrote.

The librarian of Napoleon III., Prosper Merimée, confessed "Je n'aime de l'histoire que les anecdotes." I may be forgiven, therefore, if I follow at a very respectful distance in the footsteps of the famous author of *Carmen* and give you only familiar details and homely anecdotes of Florence as she was before the great era of Dante, of Giotto, and of Arnolfo.

Let us turn our bark and go back down the stream of time to the point whence we set out, for in that wild forest where it has its source we can neither move nor live. We cannot breathe amidst those clinging brambles, those dark and impenetrable woods infested by wild beasts, because we are not upheld by that relentless combativeness which strengthened our ancestors in the defence of their bodies, their families, and their friends.

We are as navigators upon a vast ocean of which we know not the farther shore, for, like the Fata Morgana, it recedes ever from before our gaze. But we do not, like Dante, turn to the past to seek for examples, omens, and consolations in the conquest of truth and conscience ; with clear and steady eyes we look forward to the future, to the light of our ideals which brightens on the far horizon with the glory and the beauty of a dream. And to this bright future of our hopes we turn our faces, seeking there the courage which shall strengthen our hearts alike to fight and to endure.

# THE MIND AND MANNERS OF A FLORENTINE MERCHANT OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

# THE MIND AND MANNERS OF A FLORENTINE MERCHANT OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

IN the Riccardiana Library of Florence—that city not only of art and literature, but also of mediæval crafts and commerce—there is preserved a quaint document called by its author a *Book of Good Examples and Good Manners*. It is written by a Florentine of the fourteenth century, and affords more than a passing glimpse into the lives of those early Italian merchants, when they had not yet made their fortunes, but were still labouring in their shops and warehouses, striving for the achievement of riches and nobility for their families. In the old Florentines of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries we find prototypes of the modern merchants, and may even study them at a very early period, when they laboured in tiny shops and the first hardly-earned savings represented a hope rather than a reality. But even in those primitive days we find abundant evidence of that natural courtesy and love of refinement and beauty which led the early

merchants to spend the first money they could spare upon the beautifying of their houses and gardens, the collecting and ordering, for pure love of art, of pictures and illuminations and manuscripts, thus forming the nucleus of many a famous library. And not only upon business matters has this old Florentine left his opinions and advice; spiritual welfare, the care of the body, personal security, family, social relations, civil obligations, all have their share of his serious consideration.

This old manuscript of the Riccardiana Library was originally bound in boards and bears upon its second cover the arms of its author. Paolo, son of Messer Pace of Certaldo, who wrote it with his own hand in a somewhat clumsy caligraphy, has left us a medley of valuable advice upon matters of morals and practical life, proverbs and notable sayings, put together without any attempt at classification and drawn partly from traditional sources and partly from his own observation of contemporary manners and customs. His father, Pace, son of Messer Jacopo of Certaldo, doctor of laws, was one of the Priori in 1315–16 and again in 1318–19; in 1319 he went as ambassador to Siena, was again one of the Priori in 1322–23, and after holding other posts of honour, was eventually Gonfaloniere in 1337. Our Paolo, whether he was actually a merchant or not, certainly possessed the foresight, the prudence, and sometimes even the craftiness of one! Moreover at that period all Florentine citizens

were obliged to belong to one of the Guilds, and were, both nominally and by inclination, merchants, whatever other trade or profession they may have followed as well. We know that one of his descendants was an apothecary, by name Cristofano di Fuccio, and that he greatly cherished the *Examples* of his great-great-grandfather, as is proved by a declaration which he appended to the manuscript in a handwriting of the fifteenth century. I have had neither time nor desire to make further researches into the history of Paolo and his family; my only object is to call forth from the pages, yellow with age, of the Riccardiana manuscript a sufficiently vivid presentment of the old Florentine to make us realise once more the truth of the saying that all the world is kin.

Thus it begins:

"In the name of God. In this book will we write down many good examples and good customs, and good proverbs and good instructions; wherefore, my son or my brother, or my dear friend, neighbour, or companion, or whoever thou art who readest this book, hearken well and understand that which thou shalt find written in this book and put it into action; and much good and honour shalt thou derive therefrom, both for body and soul."

As is seen from the introduction, the book has a moral intention, not differing in this respect from many others which have been written since. But for us the chief and most interesting thing is to

discover, amongst all the precepts drawn from or suggested by ecclesiastical tradition, those which were directly inspired by personal experience and which reveal some hidden inclination in those ancient souls, some rebellious instinct, some curious aspect of a life differing so widely from our own, which is nevertheless descended from it. Paolo di Ser Pace has written with spirit, but without any prearranged order or that economy which is found in works of greater literary elaboration ; but it is all the better for that, as the spontaneity and sincerity of thought and expression are not marred by any preoccupations of style, and the uncertain and often incorrect writing is proof of the abundance of the ideas that came too quickly for the pen to follow. Thus within these rough pages we find the picture of the good Florentine of the fourteenth century, who, either in his shop or in a chamber of his own house, adds from time to time another page of counsel or example to those he is preparing to leave to his dear ones, rendering immortal his own memory in the minds of those who were destined to read his pages and meditate upon the wisdom they contained. This longing to go down to posterity which armed the pens of the most obscure and unknown amongst the ancient writers is a sufficiently strange phenomenon. Monuments, statues and marbles fall into decay, neither stone nor bronze can resist the ravages of time, yet a fragile scrap of paper has survived to unveil to us the existence of a long-dead forefather,

whose identity has been lost in the darkness of centuries, but whose mind was inflamed not with the hope only, but almost with the certainty, of being remembered by future generations. In perusing the old manuscript we seem to feel the pulsations of a living hand moving over it in obedience to the dictates of the mind; we seem to hear the faint voice of a distant soul revealing to us its being, its intimate life, and holding out to us imploring hands of friendship after long centuries of silence and neglect. But these are idle fancies, and we had better keep strictly to our facts, for Paolo di Ser Pace threatens to be a prolix and long-winded gossip!

Let us begin with the *Proverbs*, amongst which there are some strange sayings which deserve to be recorded. Many are in rhyme which cannot be exactly translated, and their quaint crispness is therefore lost in the English rendering. For instance:

"Hearken and behold and keep silent if thou wouldst live in peace.

"It is better to stand upright by the side of a good man until thy legs ache than to sit upon a bench by the side of a wicked man.

"Like unto the body without a soul is the man without a friend.

"Thou wilt more often repent having spoken than having kept silence.

"Speak not of those who are present.

"Be not so bitter that every man spitteth thee

out of his mouth, nor yet so sweet that every man sucketh thee dry.

"It is good to live in strange cities, but bad to die there."

And many others could we mention of these sayings scattered here and there amongst moral and religious warnings, which, as is natural, occur the most frequently. For the safety of their souls and their duty towards God were the most important things in the eyes of these simple and valiant men, who, notwithstanding the preoccupations of their business and the necessity of protecting themselves against enemies and rivals, kept ever in mind the urgency of their own spiritual advancement. But they thought of it and fulfilled their religious duties without being in any way bigots: "Go to church upon Feast Days, and upon the other days when thou canst safely and properly leave thy shop or thy warehouse." Moreover, there is a certain use in church-going. "Frequent the preachers, for of them wilt thou learn many good examples and manners." It was also a duty to "go and visit the sick, to encourage and comfort them, and likewise to watch them die, that thou mayest take an example therefrom; and likewise must thou go and see men executed, not for the pleasure of beholding them killed, but in order that they may be examples unto thee." Such brutal lessons were necessary for the instilling of good into the minds of these still rude and uncivilised men; nowadays morality is inculcated by

the flowery descriptions in the police records and daily papers.

For the mortification of the flesh the good Paolo recommends fasting.

"Make it thy custom to fast upon Saturday in honour of the blessed Virgin Mary, and take heed that upon that day thou sinnest not, for it is not sufficient to fast only from food, that is, from the sin of gluttony, but thou must fast also from all the seven mortal sins."

Then he advocates almsgiving:

"And almsgiving consisteth not only in giving money, or bread, or shelter for God's sake, but there is also great charity in supporting widows and children and orphans, in making peace, in taking men out of prison. And these are things which wipe out sin, together with confession and repentance.

"Take heed that thou givest offence to none; nevertheless, if thou dost give offence, see that thou dost not show thyself glad because of that which thou hast done, nor of that which thy son or thy kinsman hath done, because those persons may forget the hurt done unto them, but they will never forget the gladness thou didst show over it, and it will prevent any chance of reconciliation."

He bids his readers overcome "the sin of envy, by thinking of those who are worse off in this world, some because of greater poverty, some because of more sickness, some because they have fewer kindred,

some by reason of less understanding, and some because they are in a lower position." The sins of luxury and gluttony are to be similarly avoided; but of all vices the worst is pride, because from that "descend all the others." Whilst on this subject it occurs to him "to give a good example."

"Compare this life of ours unto a great cask of wine; there cometh one every day for a cup of wine, and he poureth in a cup of water in place of the wine he hath taken out; and this he doth until the cask, which at first was full of good wine, becometh full of water. And thus do we little by little lose our natural heat, and in time become feeble and die of ourselves without any other cause; and there can help thee neither money, nor kindred, nor friends, nor powers, nor good eating, nor any other worldly thing; wherefore mayest thou see how this our pride doth wax feeble of its own self!"

Not less severe is Paolo against those who will not forgive injury and meditate revenge—"because thou canst hardly ever carry out thy vengeance entirely; thou dost either too much or too little. If thou dost too much thou offendest thine enemy and he hateth thee, and people speak of it and say that thou hast acted badly; and if thou dost too little the people say, 'He had done better not to have put himself to the proof than to have done it to his shame.' So that thou must always be the one who pardoneth if thou wouldst be the victor."

But it would take too long if we were to repeat here

all the good and wise things which the merchant-moralist offers as counsel for the good of the soul and peaceful living. In his mouth the precepts acquire a greater practical value, inasmuch as they leave the field of abstract ethics to descend to earth and adapt themselves to the needs of daily life. And life in those times was fraught with constant dangers; men had to protect themselves against many more things than at present, and treachery and threats were serious and frequent. The Commune troubled itself but little about the individual safety of its citizens, who had usually to take justice and vengeance into their own hands, much as though lynch-law had already been invented then. The city at that period was of small area and the houses were huddled together one against the other, consequently there were frequent and terrible fires, on account of which they adopted many precautions useful still to-day:

"Keep always ready in thine house twelve large sacks, they are useful for removing thy goods when there is a fire in the neighbourhood, or near thee, or in thine own house. Keep always ready also a hempen rope, long enough to reach from the roof unto the earth, so that thou mayest let thyself down from any window of thine house to the ground if there should be a fire; but forget not to keep it locked within a chest, in order that neither a servant nor any of thy family may use it without thee or without thy leave. Make it always thy custom to see the lights and the fire in the house extinguished, and

be thou always the last to go to bed in thine house, and search the house for lights or fire, and see that the door is securely fastened, and likewise the windows. Search also the cellar and see that the casks are well stopped, and the door and windows fastened, the fire covered, and the lights extinguished; then go thou to bed and sleep as long as thou hast need."

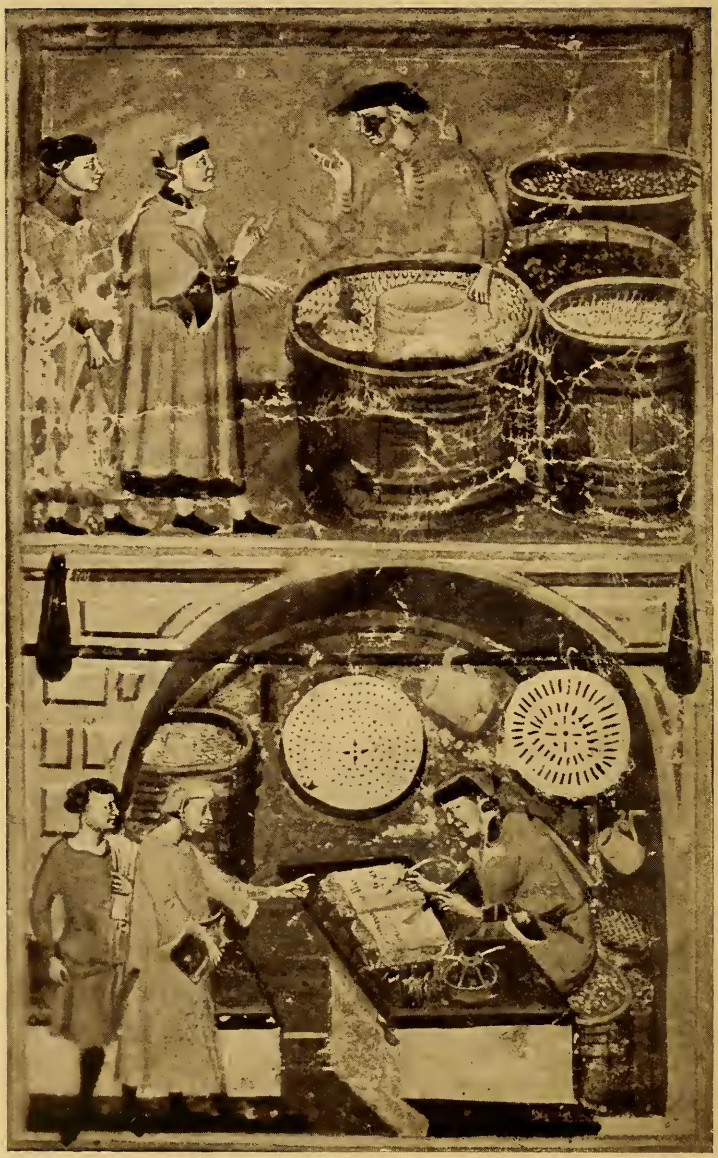
But now let us penetrate a little further into the privacy of that simple life of the fourteenth century:

"Beware of going out of thine house at night; but if thou art obliged to go forth, then take with thee a trusty companion, and a large and good light.

"If thou goest into any dangerous place, go without telling any person where thou art going. In like manner, if thou goest to Siena, say that thou art going to Lucca, and thou wilt be safe from evil persons.

"Never lend thy weapon unto any person who may ask it of thee, and for two reasons—firstly, because thou knowest not what he will do with it; and secondly, because thou knowest not how soon thou mayest have need of it thyself.

"Always cause the door of thine house to be locked at night, in order that during the night none may go forth and none may enter into thine house without thy knowledge, which thing is too great a danger; and, most especially, if thou hast any dispute, keep the key of the street-door in thine



THE CORNCHANDLER IN HIS SHOP.

(*From an early XIV. century MS. in the Laurentian Library.*)

[*To face page* 65.

own chamber at night, and lock it always day and night when thou sleepest."

It is needful to be well provided with the necessaries of life, Paolo says :

"There are certain years when there is great famine and scarcity [tinned meats were not then invented !] wherefore remember always, if thou canst do it, to furnish thine house with corn sufficient for two years, and if thou canst not get corn, then take some other grain that can be eaten ; and if thou canst not get sufficient for two years, get at least enough for a year and a half, and buy always in good time ; and do the same thing with oil, in order that when the time of scarcity cometh thou mayest not be without these two things in the house ; for the other things thou must do as best thou canst ; and see that thou hast always a cask of vinegar.

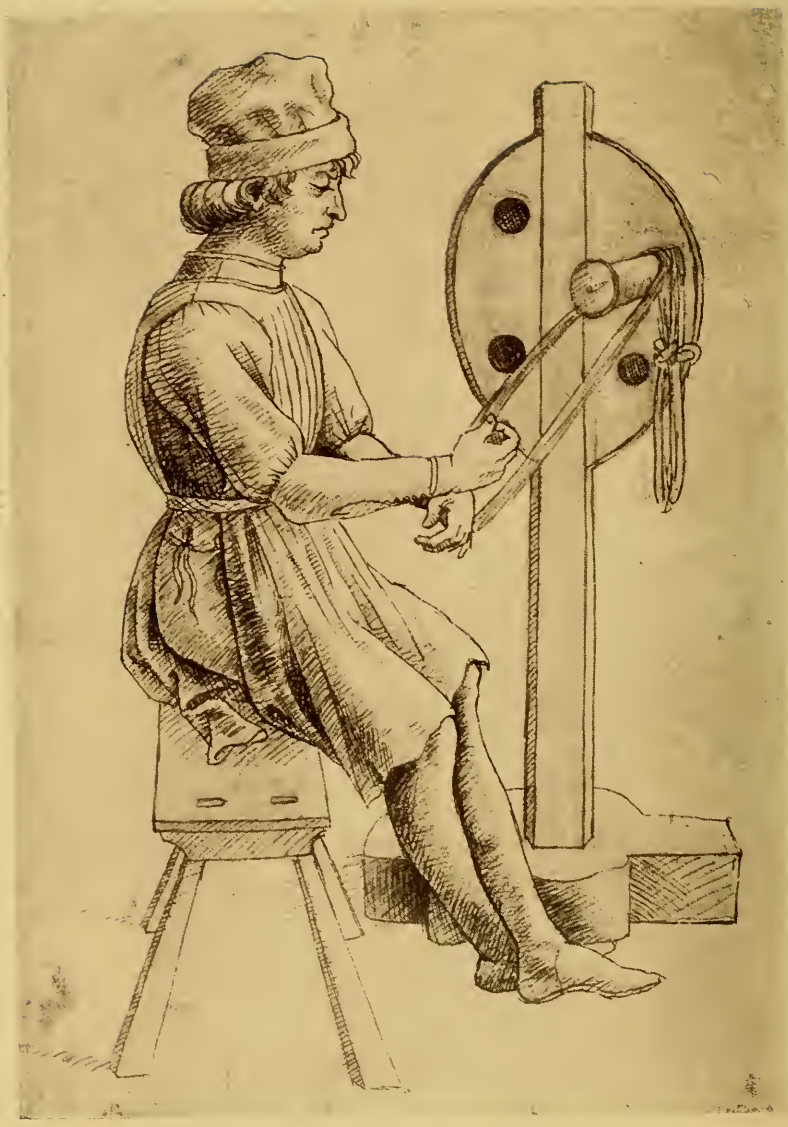
"Be not ready to run forth from the house whenever there is a noise without, but stay in thine house and feign to know nothing, and thus shalt thou escape dispute and vexation and wilt keep thy person in safety."

Then there is advice upon the care of the person and matters of health which reveal the simplicity and uncivilised ways of our forefathers :

"Arise early in the morning, even before daybreak, if thou canst, and perform thy duties in the house. It is better and more healthy to arise early than to stay up late at night. But although thou risest very early, do not leave the house until thou hearest that

the neighbours and artisans have opened their houses and shops; and make thou the sign of the Cross and go to church, and always repeat a short prayer at the door before thou goest forth out of the house. Thou must only eat twice a day, in the morning at dinner and in the evening at supper, and never drink except at meal-times, and if thou dost this thou wilt keep in good health. Moreover, it is the life for a man, and eating every hour is the life for a beast. Drink as little as thou canst, twice at each meal-time; if many wines are placed before thee, choose one that is good and drink of that until it is finished, and drink it mixed with water. When thou arisest in the morning always wash thy hands and thy face before thou leavest the house, and likewise before thou sittest down to table to dine, to break thy fast, or to sup; and also, when thou risest from table after dinner or supper, wash thy hands and thy mouth and thy teeth, and thus wilt thou be clean; and likewise is it good manners."

On matters of family life we find very valuable advice! The expectant mother must "take heed that she do not fatigue herself or drink unmixed wine, and she must have a care that she do not sit or lie upon the ground either in summer or in winter. If she desireth to eat anything, let her have it temperately and with descretion." The child "must be kept clean and warm, and it must be often looked at and examined limb by limb." During the first year of its life the child is to have nothing but



A CRAFTSMAN OF THE SILK GUILD.
(*From a manuscript of the Riccardi Library.*)

[*To face page* 67

mother's milk, and after that it may have other things little by little, together with milk; when it is six or seven years old it must be taught to read, and then it must begin to learn the trade it most prefers. Paolo has but little faith in nurses; he says:

"See that the nurse is wise and honest and of good manners, and that she be not given to drinking or drunkenness, for children do often drink in the nurse's nature together with her milk. And see that she doth not give the child the milk of goats or sheep or asses, or other beast to drink, for the boy or girl who is nourished upon the milk of a beast hath not a perfect understanding, but seemeth always to have a vain and foolish countenance and to be without full powers of reasoning."

It would be interesting to know if the foolishness and vanity with which we come into daily contact is the result of artificial feeding!

"The girls shalt thou dress well; do not let them grow too fat, and teach them to perform all the work of the household. That is, to make bread, wash the body, sift grain, to cook, to wash linen and make beds, to spin and sew, to weave French purses or to embroider in silk with the needle, to cut out garments in linen and cloth, to put new feet upon the hose, and all suchlike things; so that when they marry it may not be said of them that they come out of the woods."

He appears to have had no very high opinion of women:

"Woman is a light thing and vain, wherefore she is in great peril when she hath no husband. Ir thou hast women in thine house, keep them shut up as much as possible, and return thou home very often and keep them in fear and trembling; and take heed that they have always something to do in the house, which they must never neglect, for an idle man or woman is in great danger."

Nevertheless, in certain circumstances our good man is indulgent enough, but perhaps with an ulterior motive: "If thou hast maidens and young women in thine house, and if, as often happeneth, some of them are gazed upon by young men, do not thou be moved to fury or anger against those young men." When it is a question of disposing of the goods it is wise not to be too particular!

In the contrary case, however, one must keep one's eyes open.

"When thou takest a wife have a care that she is born of a good father and a good mother, and that her grandmother is of good repute, for it doth not often happen that when the mother of a damsel is good and likewise her grandmother, that the damsel herself is bad. Take great heed that the wife thou choosest is not born of a family where there is sickness, or consumption, or scrofula, or madness, or scurvy, or gout, for it often happeneth that the children who are born of her have all or some of these faults or blemishes!"

But besides questions of pathological heredity, the man must pay attention to the wife's appearance,

A CRAFTSMAN OF THE SILK GUILD.
*(From a manuscript of the Riccardi Library.)*

[*To face page* 69.

manners, and morals: "See that thou choosest a woman of wisdom and a fine figure, and thou shalt have fine children of her, and if she is wise she will be good." Moralists in general are against the marrying of widows, and neither does Paolo look upon them with a favourable eye:

"If thou art able, beware of taking a widow woman for thy wife, because thou wilt never be able to satisfy her, and every time that thou refusest her anything she may ask of thee she will say, 'My other husband did not treat me thus!' Yet truly, if thou hast already had another wife thou mayest take her with greater safety, and if she saith, 'My other husband did not treat me thus,' or 'Blessed be the soul of So-and-so,' thou canst reply, 'Blessed be the soul of Madonna So-an-so, who did not cause me this tribulation every day!' And if it is thy misfortune to be obliged to marry a second time, see that thy second wife is not better born than was the first, so that she may not be able to say unto thee, 'It is more proper for me than it was for her, because I am born of a greater family and of more honourable parentage.'"

And if thou hast sons, "teach them divers trades and not all the same, because they cannot be all of the same mind. Inquire of them, each one for himself, which trade or calling he desireth to follow, then put him to that trade and he will become a far better master than if thou didst put him to one of thine own choosing.

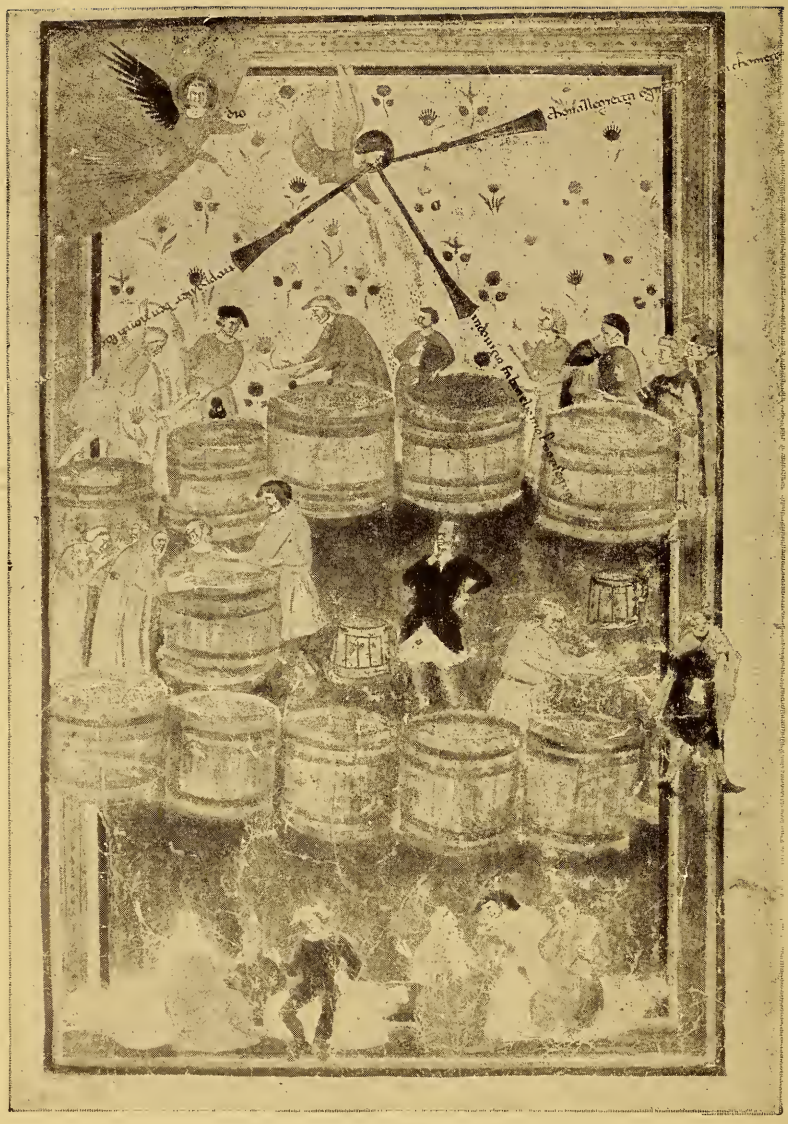
"If thou desirest that thy sons should be citizens

or inhabitants of any special country, town, or city, send them that they may be brought up and grow up there, and there learn their trade or business. And say not, 'I will send him as a child into France, and there he shall grow up and learn to trade with the merchandise of France.' Because when he is thirty years old or thereabouts, and returneth to live in Florence, he will not be a good master, nor will he be a clever and experienced merchant in Florence as he was in France; because, having grown up there and having many friends there, his mind is still always in France. And at everything contrary which happeneth to him in Florence, he will say, 'If I had been in France this would not have happened unto me!' And it is the same thing with other countries. Nevertheless, it is sometimes necessary to go into strange lands.

"If thou hast a son who, in thine opinion, is not doing well in thy country, place him immediately with a merchant who will send him into another country. Or send him unto some dear friend of thine; then he will forget the habits of his own country and will form new habits, and perchance he will amend his ways and do well. There is nothing else to be done, because if he remained with thee he would never change his ways."

Our good merchant also occupied himself with what we should nowadays call *social relations:*

"Take heed to consort always with good persons, and with men who are older than thee, and whom



SCENE IN CORN MARKET, FLORENCE.

*(From an early XIV. Century MS. in the Laurentian Library.)*

[*To face page* 71.

thou believest to be wiser and better than thyself; and consort always with those who are richer and greater than thou art, and with men of good manners. Beware of speaking evil of thy friend or companion or neighbour, or of thy Commune, because when thou thinkest to speak evil of those with whom thou art accustomed to consort, thou speakest evil of thine own self; wherefore must thou never have dealings with persons who are evil or vicious, nor frequent their company.

"Evil speaking is one of the great sins, and it is irremediable, because if thou wouldst be forgiven thou must give back his good repute unto him from whom thou hast taken it away. And how canst thou render it him again, for thou hast spoken ill of him unto twenty persons, and those twenty persons have repeated it unto an hundred, and those hundred will speak ill of him unto a thousand, and thus is evil repute spread about amongst many. And even if thou shouldst say, 'I will now speak good of him,' the good will not come unto the ears of all those who heard the evil."

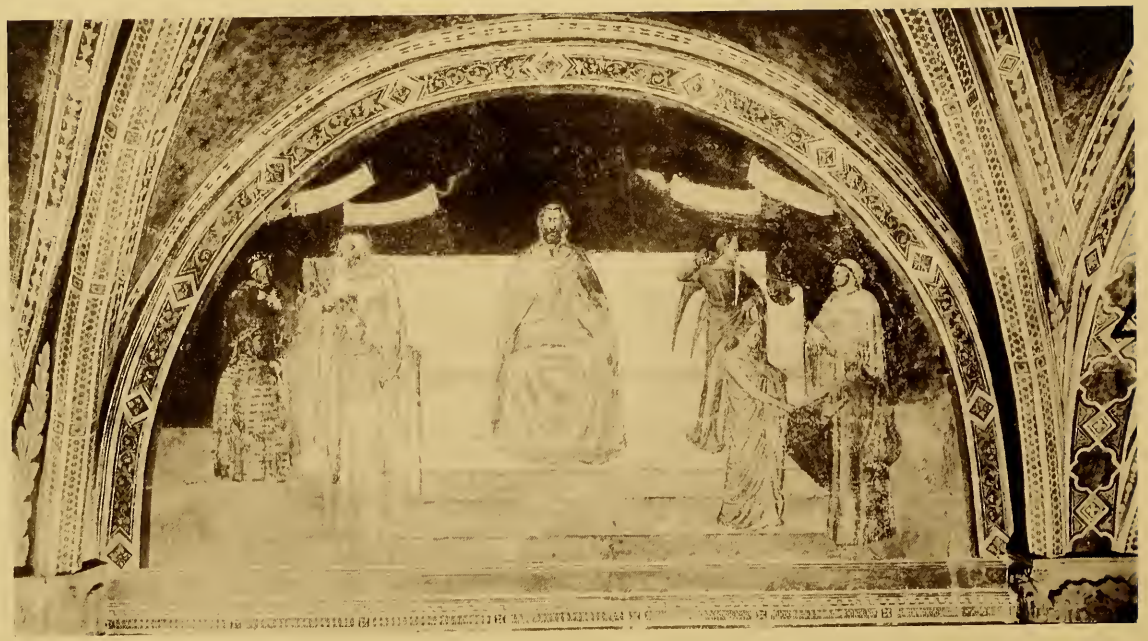
Then Paolo gives further moral directions regarding gambling, also on the subject of the "women belonging to others," of whom he says, "bethink thee that they are all made after one fashion and therefore do not love one more than another"; benefits bestowed should be esteemed but little and never remembered or regretted; of the *maltolto*, or money unduly obtained, he says, "beware of taking it, in order that thou

mayest not have to render it again, which would seem too hard for thee." In a civil community like that of Florence in those days, in which it was necessary to be suspicious of everything, it was imperative to cultivate habits of caution. To trust any one who has already deceived you is folly and "simplicity," wherefore, "beware of trusting a second time him who hath already deceived thee once; for there is a saying of a certain wise man which saith, 'whosoever cheateth thee once, God will curse him; whosoever cheateth thee twice, God will curse him and thee; but if thou art cheated thrice, God will curse thee alone.'" And in order not to find oneself in a position to be obliged to repeat this bitter saying "it is safer to keep silence thyself than to pray another to keep silence; wherefore take heed never to tell thy secret unto another, because thus thou becomest the servant of him whom thou prayest that he will not reveal the secret thou hast told unto him."

But now let us come to the more practical advice which concerns business matters and merchandise.

The first maxim we come across is rather of an egoistical order, but it has the merit of being as sincere as though it came out of an American book! "Labour always rather for thyself than for others," to which our moralist adds:

"A very fine and great thing it is to understand how to earn money, but a finer and greater thing is it to understand how to spend it with discretion and when it is needful, and always to know how to keep



THE FRESCO IN THE RESIDENCE OF THE WOOL GUILD, REPRESENTING THE GOOD AND THE BAD OFFICERS.

[*To face page* 73.

and guard that which hath been left thee by thy father or other kindred. Money which a man hath not earned is more quickly spent than that which he hath earned with the sweat of his brow and with labour and care."

With regard to expenses he gives minute and valuable advice :

"Give good heed to the small sums thou spendest out of the house, for it is they which empty the purse and consume wealth, and they go on continually. And do not buy all the good victuals which thou seest, for the house is like a wolf, the more thou givest it the more doth it devour.

"When thou dost establish a shop or a warehouse in thine own country or in a foreign country, see that thou choosest a house in the best part of the town, if thou canst obtain it. And see also that the workmen thou takest are the best and most expert that are to be had in the trade thou wouldst follow ; and look not to the cost, for neither the hire of a good house nor the wage of a good workman ever was dear. Thou shalt not delight in going to law ; do thou rather accept less from him who oweth thee without a lawsuit than obtain more with a lawsuit. When thou makest an agreement of any kind, take a book and write down in it the day whereon the agreement is made, and the notary who maketh it, and the witnesses, and the reason and with whom it is made, so that if thou or thy children have need of it they may find it ready. Always have thy last will ready

written, and if it happeneth that thou desirest to add to it, or to erase somewhat, then make thou another will and annul the first."

Whilst on the subject of wills our Paolo relates a delightful story, which would appeal even to an American merchant of to-day ; it is an *example*, which he entitles, "The Will of Giovanni Cavazza" :

"This Giovanni Cavazza was a wealthy man who had two daughters, and when they were of a marriageable age he married them to two noble youths and gave to each one a large dowry. Now, having given all that he possessed unto his sons-in-law, Giovanni was left poor, but this was not known either unto his sons-in-law or his daughters. And as he desired to live honourably, as he had been used to do all his life, he spake thus unto his sons-in-law and his daughters : 'I have now grown old and have but a short while to live, wherefore I must make my will.' And he procured a strong chest with two locks and placed inside it a very large bar of iron and a writing which said, '*This is the will of Giovanni Cavazza ; he who unto others doth give himself and all, by this rod of iron shall he be killed withal.*' And he locked the chest very carefully with two keys, and one he gave unto the Brothers Minor and the other he gave unto the Preaching Friars (the Franciscans and the Dominicans), saying unto them, 'Ye shall not give these keys unto any person so long as I shall live ; after my death give them unto So-and-so, my sons-in-law, because I desire that they should be my heirs and should inherit after

THE CORN MARKET OF OR SAN MICHELE.

*(From an early XIV. Century MS. in the Laurentian Library.)*

[*To face page* 75.

me that which I have reserved for myself in case I should fall into distress.' Then he went unto one who was an old and dear friend and said unto him, 'Lend me two gold florins.' And he lent them. Then Giovanni Cavazza invited his daughters and his sons-in-law to dinner; and after they had eaten he said unto them, 'Wait ye for me here in the hall,' and he shut himself up in his chamber. And there he began to count that money over and over again. The sons-in-law and the daughters watched at the keyhole and beheld the money. And Giovanni said aloud unto himself, 'Whoever doth good unto me, so will I do unto him; if these my sons-in-law and my daughters behave themselves well unto me, I will leave them the whole of this. And verily, if I should die of hunger, never in my life will I touch one penny of this money, for I desire that my daughters should have it all.' And the daughters and their husbands heard all that he said; and when he had done this for a great while he made pretence of replacing the money and then issued forth from his chamber taking that money with him, but his sons-in-law believed that it was in the chest. Then he called his sons-in-law unto him and said, 'Help me now and treat ye me well, and I will leave you rich men.' And from that day forward they each strove who should do him the most honour, and clothe him and feed him and bear him company. At last he made his will and left much money to friars and priests and hospitals and to the poor, all for the love of God, and his sons-in-law did he leave to be his

heirs, and they did bind themselves to pay the debts which he should leave unpaid. And he ordered that, so soon as he should be buried, the friars should give the keys unto his sons-in-law ; and to these he said, 'Bury me honourably, for ye can well do it, considering what I shall leave unto you.' Each promised that he would do so. After this Giovanni lived with his sons-in-law and his daughters for a long time and in great honour, and at their expense. Then he died, and they caused him to be buried with much honour ; and they returned home, thinking it a thousand years till they should obtain the keys. And they went to fetch them, but first they paid the debts, as Giovanni had ordered. And when the debts were paid they were given the keys, and they returned home and opened the chest and found therein the iron bar and the writing : '*This is the will of Giovanni Cavazza ; he who unto others doth give himself and all, by this rod of iron shall he be killed withal.*'"

Now this *example*, which is distinguished by that pleasant cheerfulness which enlivens some of Boccaccio's tales, this jest which pleased our moralist so much that he related it twice in his pages, and not without a touch of malice in his enjoyment, gives us an insight into certain hidden aspects of his nature, certain incorrigible defects in his character of astute and circumspect merchant. Beneath the habit of the devout moralist we discover the striped hose and the purse of the merchant ; under the outward semblance of religious unction we recognise the furtive cunning

THE CHURCH OF SANTA REPARATA AND THE CAMPANILE.

(*From a miniature of the "Biadajolo."*)

[*To face page* 77.

of that native trickery which neither religion nor *examples* could succeed in restraining. The modern merchant makes no pretences, because he belongs to a different age and a different race; he knows no waverings between good and evil, for the simple reason that he looks only to the useful, into which either of the other qualities may enter with varying percentage. The fourteenth-century merchant wants to make a good profit, but he always keeps an eye on the safety of his soul, and his consequent uncertainties are easy to read between the lines of his counsels. Listen to the practical and crafty advice he offers in matters of business :

"When thou hast need that another should render thee a service, go into his house, that is, into the house of the man from whom thou art going to ask the service, because he will not refuse thee in his own house as he would do outside.

"If thou buyest a field or a vineyard, see that thou buyest a field that is small and good rather than one that is large and barren, because thou wilt always find labourers in the good field.

"When thou dwellest at thy country house, beware of consorting together with the labourers when they take their rest, because they do all drink and are heated with wine and have their weapons about them, wherefore do thou let them alone upon feast days. If thou hast ought to do with the labourers, go unto them when they are working in the fields and thou shalt find them humble and meek, with the goodness of the

plough, the spade, and the hoe. If thou hast to reckon with them, never do it at thy country house, but make them come into the city and there do thy reckoning; because if thou dost it in the country, all the other labourers will take the part of thy labourers against thee, and thou wilt not be able to prevent them getting the better of thee and always putting thee in the wrong.

"When thou goest to dwell in a strange place, seek to have as many friends as thou canst, and especially a priest or friar of good and honest life, and a physician. Endeavour likewise to obtain the friendships of one or more of the great men of the place, not spending too much money upon them, however; by doing them a little honour, thou, who art a stranger, will incline unto thee any courteous and wise man. See that thou causest such things as will please them to be brought from thine own city and give them unto them once or twice a year; such things as a fine sword, or a fine knife, or bells for a falcon, or jesses or hoods and similar things, or rings or belts, or bags or silken purses, which may be useful for them or for their wives or children."

But still more business-like is the technical advice Paolo gives:

"When thou buyest corn or other grain see that the measure be not filled up at one pouring in, for thereby wilt thou lose always one or two *per cento.* But when thou sellest, then do this, and thy store of grain will increase.

THE ANCIENT BOUNDARY OF FLORENCE.
*(From a miniature of the "Biadajolo.")*

[*To face page* 79.

"If thou hast money to lay out and hast but a little money, then buy small grain rather than corn, because thou wilt thus gain two *soldi* upon every bushel of grain the same as though it were corn, and that grain will cost thee but the third of the price of corn. Moreover, in times of scarcity thou wilt be able to sell it more easily.

"If thou buyest other merchandise, buy it when it fetcheth only a small price and is but seldom asked for, and thou canst not make a mistake; for in a little while thou wilt sell it to thine advantage and cannot lose thy money.

"When thou buyest wine, always ask of the man from whom thou buyest in what manner he doth mix it and when is the time to put it into new vessels, and do thou the same and the wine will not be spoiled.

"If thou art engaged in any business and other letters come tied up together with thine own (in those days there were neither posts nor stamps!), always remember to read thine own letters before giving the others unto those persons to whom they belong. And if thy letters advise thee to buy or sell any merchandise to thine advantage, send immediately for the broker and do that which thy letters advise, and then afterwards give the letters which came with thine own. But do not give them before thou hast concluded thine own business, because those letters could perchance advise something which would injure thy business, and the service which thou hast rendered

by carrying the letters unto thy friend or neighbour or unto a stranger might cause great hurt unto thee, and thou shouldst never serve others and thereby hurt thyself or thine own affairs."

It is advisable to be prudent and careful with one's neighbours :

"Always stand well with thy neighbours, because people always inquire of them concerning thine affairs before they inquire of thee, and in matters both of honour and disgrace they can greatly harm thee."

And above all things be circumspect!

"When thou art in the house of another, beware of speaking evil of any person belonging to that house.

"Moreover, beware when thou art in the street, or against a division of planks or a thin wall, of saying aught that thou wouldst not that every man should hear. When thou enterest into a chamber, say nothing until thou knowest for a certainty who is in that chamber ; because, behind the curtain or some other hidden place, there might be shut up or concealed a person who would hearken unto all thy deeds or sayings. If thou desirest to speak of secret things, go thou to speak thy secrets in an open place, or in a field, or meadow or open ground, but look well that there be no person near who can hear thee ; and beware of hedges, of trees, caves, or walls, or the corners of streets, where other persons might be hidden."

But wherefore all these precautions ? Perhaps to

*Photo]* [*Alinari.*

THE FRESCO BY CENNINI IN THE PRISON OF THE *STINCHE.*

[*To face page* 81.

whisper into the ear of friend or companion advice like this, the last which I shall repeat here:

"When thou sittest among the judges, receive thou no gifts which have been sent unto thee from either side; but I tell thee, on the contrary, that if in a court of law thou hast need of the friendship of some lord or ruler of a place, his friendship is very easily gained if thou makest gifts unto him. Look and see who of his household is the most in his confidence, and make thou friends first with that person and bestow something upon him, and then ask help and counsel of him, and he will show thee how to obtain the love of his lord and how to present unto him the thing for which the man nearest his lord hath the greatest desire."

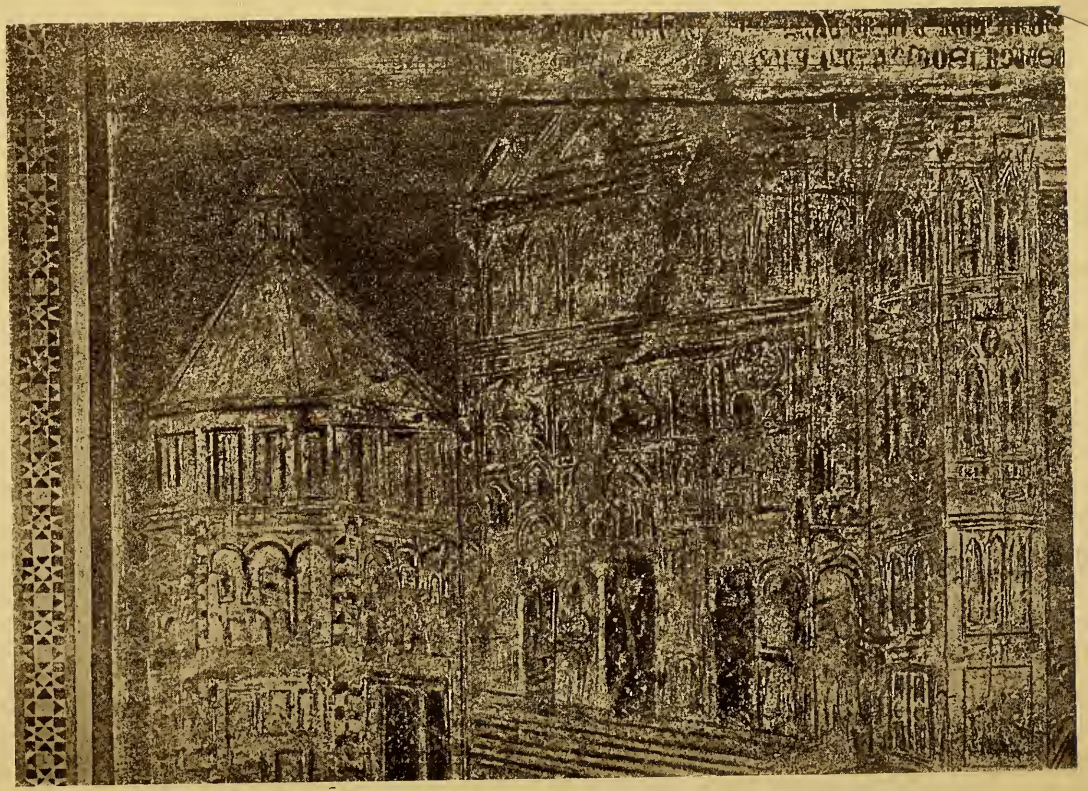
Truly this reads almost like a scene from Shakespeare! Iago in secret converse with Shylock!

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

THE PULPIT OF SAN PIERO SCHERAGGIO, FROM WHICH DANTE ADDRESSED THE PEOPLE.

[*To face page* 83.

# THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE RENAISSANCE FLORENTINES



SAN GIOVANNI, THE CAMPANILE, AND SANTA MARIA DEL FIORE IN A FRESCO OF SANTA CROCE.

[*To face page* 85.

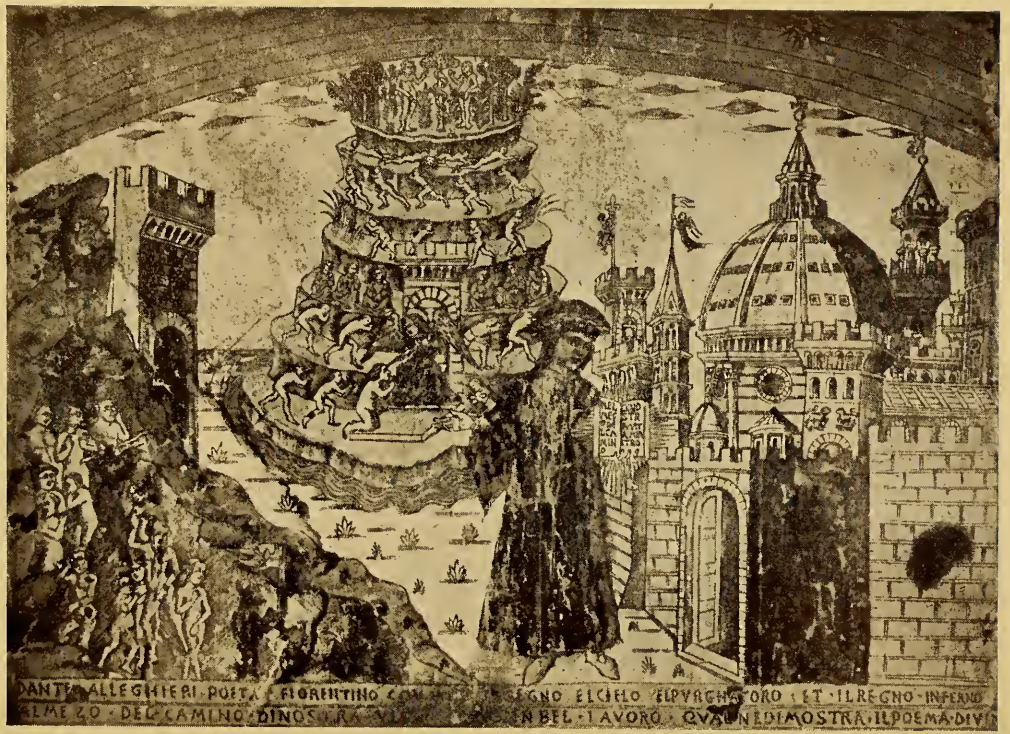
# THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE RENAISSANCE FLORENTINES

FIORENZA of the thirteenth century differed very little from the Fiorenza of the fourteenth and of the fifteenth. To whoever gazed down upon her from a height she would have appeared a gloomy mass of battlemented towers, encompassed by walls and bulwarks.

The public buildings that we admire to-day, the graceful cupolas of the churches, the bell-towers whose voices repeat the heart-beats of the people, did not yet stand out against a background of deep-blue sky like the huge masts of a mighty vessel. The third cincture of walls that enclosed the city, whose demolition our own day has witnessed, was not yet completed, and Arno made a bend near the Piazza di Santa Croce, issuing between the Ponte a Rubaconte and the Castle of Altafronte. This was in the early times of the fourteenth century, when the little Church of Santa Reparata was still extant, and the very name of Santa Maria del Fiore was unknown. In the place where later stood the *loggia* of Or San Michele the corn-market was held; the tower begun by Giotto,

and called after his name, had not yet been carried up to the last tier of windows by Francesco Talenti; only on the tower of the Palazzo dei Priori the great bell of the people, known as the *vacca*, already bellowed forth its deep brazen tones, evoking the echoes of the sweet voice of liberty.

The miniatures in the *Biadajolo*, the frescoes of the *Bigallo*, already mentioned and here reproduced, give us only a faint idea of the Florence of those days. They are rather fanciful representations made at a period when perspective was still unknown, and the brilliant red roofs contrast too vividly in tone with the forest of towers that seem to intertwine and mount one on the top of another. To these may be added, for the thirteenth-century Fiorenza, a view of the Palace of the Priori as it was in the time of the Duke of Athens, with the Church of San Piero Scheraggio, where the parliament of the Commune was held before it had a building of its own and where Dante addressed the people from a pulpit which is still in existence. This valuable fresco attributed to Cennini was in the prison of the *Stinche*, which was transformed into a theatre at the beginning of the last century and called Pagliano after the name of its founder, but is now known as the Teatro Verdi. The fresco is on the stairs leading to the Sala Filarmonica. Another fresco, to be seen with much difficulty in the upper cloisters of Santa Croce, shows San Giovanni, Santa Maria del Fiore, and the Campanile as they appeared when newly erected. The painting by




THE PICTURE BY DOMENICO DI MICHELINO.

*(From an old engraving.)*

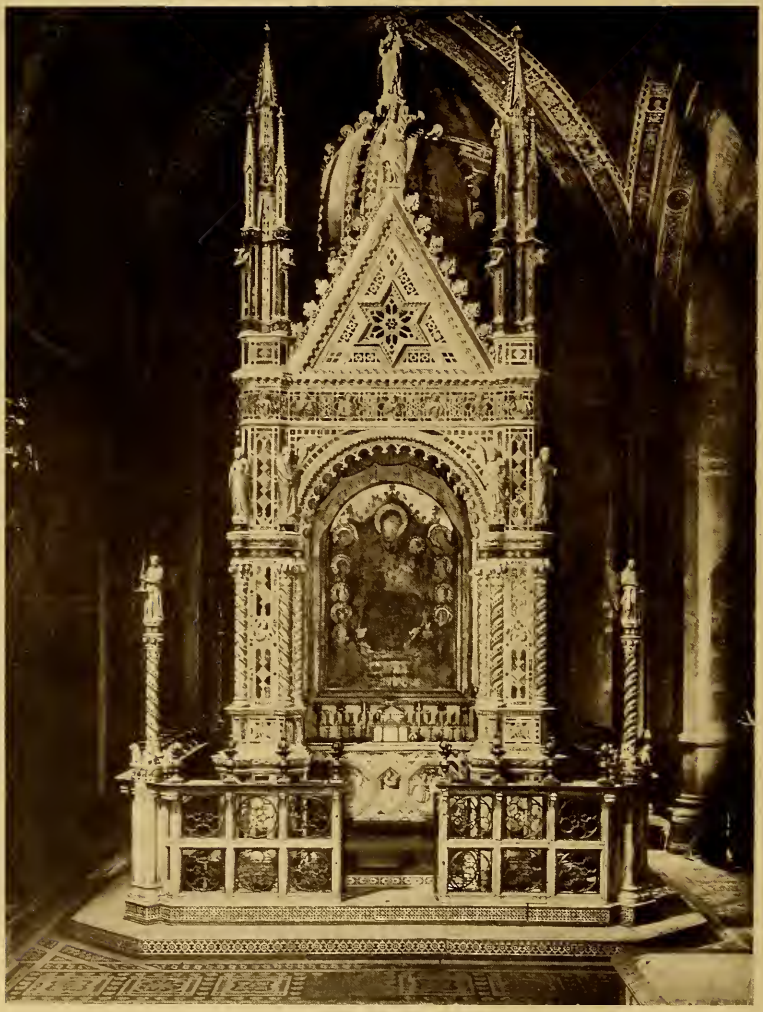
[*To face pag* 87.

Domenico di Michelino, which may still be seen in the Duomo, endeavours to show the Florence of Dante, whose figure is a conspicuous object in the very centre of the picture; but this also is a fancy Florence, imaginary like the *Purgatorio* and *Inferno* which the artist has painted close beside it. A more recent view of the city may be seen in the *Assumption of the Virgin* by Botticelli, painted for Matteo Palmieri, and now in the English National Gallery. The subject was taken from Palmieri's poem *La città di Vita*, and the painting was at the time considered almost heretical, because the artist had depicted the Virgin as received into the glory of heaven, surrounded by a sublime vision of female angels. But the landscape that serves as a background to this marvellous composition is so lost in the distance and in the shadows of a golden twilight that it does not help us much in our quest. It is only later on that our desire is gratified, when we can see a plan of the city as it appeared at the end of the fifteenth century in the *Chronicles of Nüremberg*.

But in order faithfully to picture Florence from the thirteenth century to the glorious days of the Renaissance, when the treasures that her merchants had garnered from all parts of the world were poured forth for the creation of immortal monuments, following up the traditions of art inaugurated by Arnolfo, Giotto and Orcagna—to picture these scenes, which should be peopled with figures of artisans, merchants, women, friars, monks, jugglers, hawkers, poets, story-

tellers, men-at-arms, rustics, pages, knights, that crowd the canvas—to give an even incomplete idea of the history of the Florentine people, that from mediæval manners upraised themselves to the polish of the Renaissance—to do this would be the work of an artist who was at the same time an archæologist and a poet. Nor would this suffice. But until this artist appears, if ever he does, who shall thus teach us by sight, we must content ourselves with tasting only such palatable bits as can be extracted from old books of reminiscences, domestic chronicles, and private correspondence, from story-tellers and poets, from dusty archives and forgotten records. Here embedded are many interesting particulars, many anecdotes, many items of news that help to give an insight into the life of that time, so remote even from our imagination.

In the narrow, crowded streets, beside the massive stone palaces secure as fortresses, with their embattled towers rising proudly above their heads, crouched roofs thatched with straw, and windows covered with oiled linen in lieu of glass. These houses were always exposed to danger by fire, and Paolo di Ser Pace da Certaldo, as we read in a previous chapter, advised people always to keep large sacks ready, in which to remove their portable property in case of a conflagration in the neighbourhood, and also long ropes to serve as fire-escapes, for even the higher, better-class houses, with their many rooms and winding passages, were not much safer. The dusty streets were never swept, except by the water that ran like



*Photo]* *[Alinari.*

OR SAN MICHEI E, THE SHRINE BY ORCAGNA.

*[To face page 89.*

a rivulet in and out of the gutters, in which, as Sacchetti tells us in his famous "novels," those animals specially protected by Sant'Antonio used to wallow, "after which they will pay visits in the neighbouring houses, bringing with them dirt, confusion, and disorder." Not that these houses were patterns of cleanliness. They were swept once a week, on Saturdays; on other days the refuse was tossed under the bed, where could be found a little of everything, such as fruit-parings, cores, bones, plucked feathers, and live fowls, cackling geese, and an abundance of cobwebs. These were just the modest dwellings of a people satisfied with very little, who thought more of gain than of the comforts and luxuries of daily life—people pertaining to good families, nevertheless, but who passed their time shooting and hunting in the country over their own lands. Sometimes, however, they were also inhabited by upstarts, who endeavoured to enrich themselves by arts and trades. The grandfather of Messer Lapo da Castiglionchio, who lived on the threshold of Messer Riccardo da Quona, beyond the Colonnine, used to have the city gate closed for him every night by an old woman, a good faithful servant, who afterwards deposited the key for him in his bedroom, so primitive were the manners.

But Florence meanwhile was gradually growing as the prosperity of her citizens augmented. The old houses with thatched roofs were often burnt down. When a fire broke out, the whole population was

excited and every one had to be under arms and on guard. Even the Signoria, to destroy with the least expense the houses of their adversaries whom they had perchance banished from the city, used to set them aflame and then pay the damages the fire might have caused to innocent neighbours. And passions burnt as hotly as fire. The quarrels, riots, feuds, *vendette*, that were incessant, dyed the streets red with blood, while the triumphs in these frays were celebrated with feasts and banqueting. The Commune, grown proud and haughty, quickly offended, too, and ready to strike, redoubled its forces in order to subdue its foes. This achieved, the merchants of the conquering city celebrated a new species of triumph ; they led their mules, laden with the cloths of Calimala, the silks of Por Santa Maria, across the plains and mountains that a short time before had been scoured by the horse and foot soldiers of their army. The traders, following hard upon the footsteps of their less peaceable neighbours, bore Florentine gold and Florentine wit to the cities under whose walls had but lately waved the banner that bore the badge of this great free people.

The Mercato Vecchio was then the heart of Florence, and seemed to the Florentines the most beautiful piazza in the world. Whoever reads its praises in the pages of Antonio Pucci, or searches among the tales of Franco Sacchetti for the chronicles of daily life, can form an idea of a life that was contented to enact itself upon so small a stage. Here, on this, the true emporium of Florentine commerce,

*Pholo*] [*Alinari.*

THE OLD MARKET.

*(From a drawing by Burci.)*

[*To face page* 91.

were gathered together shopkeepers, merchants, doctors, idlers, gamblers, rustics, apothecaries, rogues, maid-servants, nobles, beggars, hucksters, and gay bands of spendthrifts. Here, too, was to be found merchandise of every sort and kind: fresh meat, fruit, cheese, vegetables, game, poultry, linen, flowers, pottery, barrels, and second-hand furniture. The street-boys, mischievous and quick-tongued even then, took up their permanent abode there, as if it were their proper home; here, too, rats held perpetual carnival. But people flocked thither from all parts.

No day passed that some disturbance did not occur, some quarrel, some alarm. Thus a horse became obstreperous, and every person shouted at the top of their voices for help, "*Accorr'uomo*"; the Piazza dei Signori was thronged with the runaways, the palace door was hastily shut, the family armed itself, and so did the followers of the captain and of the executioner; some for very fear hid under their beds, to come out after the tumult had subsided covered with dirt and cobwebs. Two mules picked at by crows would begin to kick and jump over the stalls of the sellers. Once again all the shops were hastily shut, and serious quarrels would arise between the clothiers and the butchers on account of the harm done by these infuriated beasts. Sometimes even graver disputes arose. Gamblers and keepers of gaming-tables would come to blows and such a scene be enacted as is represented in the fresco in the Monastery of Lecceto near Siena. The dice fall on

the table in such a manner that one of the players loses; he springs to his feet infuriated by the stroke of ill-luck, and stretching out his arms clutches the winner by the throat; the other, pale with fear and anger, seeks in vain for the avenging knife; oaths break out from the lips of the combatants; the voices of the bystanders, women and children, rise up in fear, "*Accorr'uomo!*" The dense crowd retreats, and when the guard or captain arrives with his followers, always too late of course, the victim already lies on the ground in a pool of blood.

Such the dramas, the *faits divers*, of those days, which every now and again disturbed the peace of our ancestors. The burgher story-tellers, who fulfilled the office of our modern newspapers, rarely tell of these cruel acts. They prefer to dwell on the tricks and practical jokes with which the merry folk amused themselves, eternal source of fireside talk when the housemates were gathered together before the andirons of those huge open hearths, under whose blackened chimneys the family assembled before the hour of putting out the lights should sound, after which whosoever went last to bed would ascertain that the barrels were well closed and the doors and windows tightly shut. They were always ready for a laugh, these people—always ready to forget the terrors of the other world held up to them by their priests and calculated by their weird horrors to damp the most buoyant spirits. The incredulity of the new age already began to peep forth, mocking at the priests,

THE OLD MARKET BEFORE ITS DEMOLITION (1885).

[*To face page* 93.

and also a little at the miracles and many like impostures. The mockers and scoffers who laughed at others, and sought to deceive their neighbours and the world, called themselves "new men," and their mischievous doctrines' "new things." The group of people that gathered around the counters of shops and under the *loggie* that nestled close to the palaces, made the place re-echo with their clear, silvery laughter, to which corresponded the knot of whispering women who clustered chatting beside their housedoors.

The artists, or, as they then called themselves, the artificers, were the most ingenious plotters of practical jokes, concocted between one stroke of the brush and another. The memory of them endured for a long while, so much so that Vasari has incorporated into his *Lives* various of those which the novelists had not included in their chronicles of citizen life. "It has ever been that among painters are found strange men," says Sacchetti,—and Bonamico Buffalmacco, immortalised in the *Decamerone*, and the names of Bartolo Gioggi, Bruno di Giovanni, Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, Paolo Uccello, and Donatello, recall to our memories tricks played on a certain Calandrino and on the Fat Carpenter, besides many others who were the victims of these merciless high spirits. But even graver people were infected by the mad wish to joke and laugh, and from the workshops of artificers it entered into those of the apothecaries, it took possession of the doctors, of the judges, of the proctors, it even penetrated into the Palace to enliven the

dulness of the Priori obliged to stay there shut up far away from wife and child, simple men of simple habits, both men and habits bearing the stamp of ancient boorishness. Thus the whole Signoria slept in one room, a fact that gave occasion for many jokes, and indeed provoked them. So simple, truly, were these *signori*, that it was not uncommon for the provost of the Priori to go himself into the kitchen to broil his own slice of meat. The tricks and pranks played bordered often, it must be owned, on roguery; but a good laugh at the expense of the person who was in the wrong, and on whom the joke had been perpetrated, was considered to put everything square. For in those days, when everybody thought of themselves and of their own interests, public opinion had no pity or compassion on the man who let himself be befooled. By common consent all manner of wily tricks were permitted to merchants, and the Florentine traders were famous for their great cunning. Sacchetti tells what happened to a certain Soccebonel of Friuli who went to buy some cloth from one of them. The merchant measured out four ells, but then managed to steal half the amount; to cover the fraud, he said to Soccebonel, "If you want to do well with this cloth, leave it to soak all night in water and you will see how excellent it will become." Soccebonel did as he was told, and then took the cloth to the shearer. When he went to fetch it back, he asked how much he had to pay. "It seems to me, nine *braccia*," said the shearer; "therefore give me nine *soldi*." "Nine

*Pho'o]* [*Alinari.*

THE OLD MARKET WITH THE LOGGIA DEL PESCE, BY VASARI.

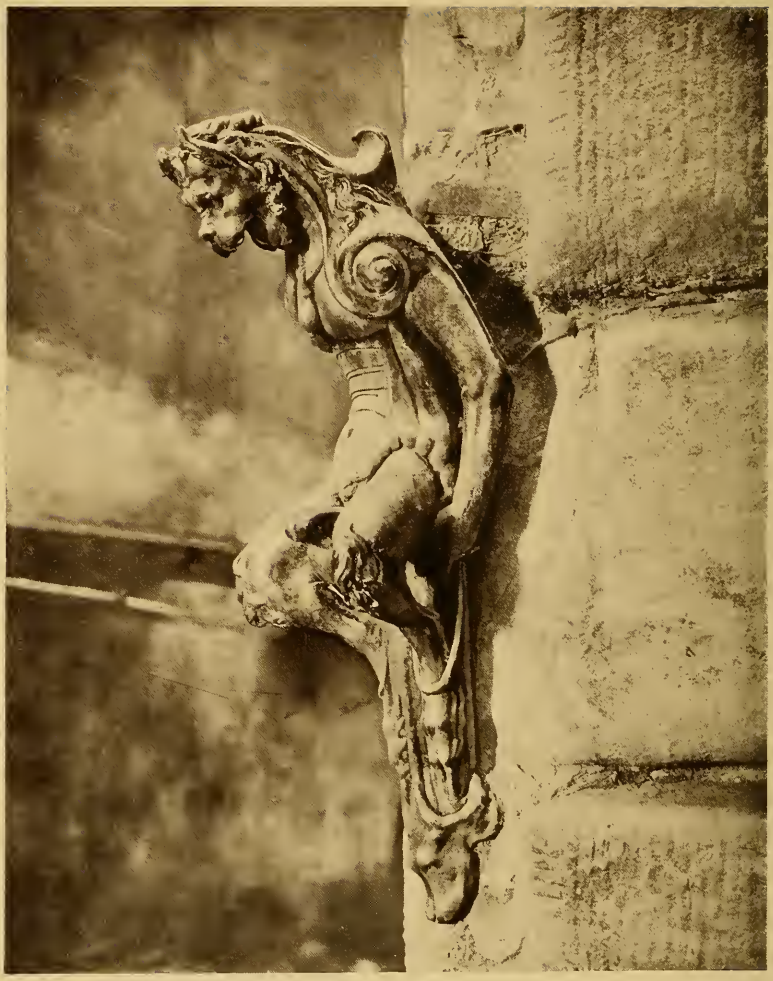
[*To face page* 95.

*braccia*," said the other, "alas! they measure, but the cloth does not grow under their hands." Soccebonel runs to the cutter, runs hither and thither in his despair. At last he is told that these Florentine cloths do not grow in water, and one man tells him about a person who bought a *braccio* of Florentine cloth, kept it in water, and by next morning it had shrunk so that there was none left.

But whoever searches the mercantile codes amidst the dust of libraries and archives will find that they all concur in condemning such tricks. All of these papers, each of which begins, "In the name of the Father, Amen," are pervaded by instances of good examples, and all breathe excellent customs, wise saws, and honest rules. Their theoretical precepts were clearly inspired by the most severe morality. As we have seen in the *Consigli* of Paolo di Ser Pace da Certaldo, these books are a curious mixture of precepts inspired by the most Christian morality, and of advice, both practical and technical, founded upon the most utilitarian business principles. This contrast between religious aspirations and the most cynical and egotistical practice existed in the men of the *Trecento* and following centuries—until the time, in fact, when Italian thought and morality became entirely dominated by the influence of religion. It must not be supposed, however, that the mental condition of the people of that day was false and perverse, or that the morality of their theoretical precepts was deliberately intended to conceal their intention of doing exactly

the contrary in real life. This was by no means the case. This contrast resulted from the manners of the times, from fixed traditions, and from that rule of daily life which never swerved from certain habitual practices; and the inclination to falsify weights, corrupt justice, swindle in selling—in short, to employ every means of furthering their own individual interests—always proved stronger than the honest intentions of these theoretical moralists. They wrote in perfect good faith, far removed in thought from the vicissitudes of life and from long-established tradition, and they would have liked the world to be regulated according to those precepts of exemplary morality. But when they quitted their desks, where they had devoted themselves to the spiritual exercise of inditing pious precepts for children and grandchildren, when they laid down their pens in order to return to their banks or shops, they found regular and unconscious breakers of those same precepts in their own clerks and assistants, and the force of habit was so strong that they could not escape from it or apply to real life those moral precepts they themselves had just been compiling. The contrast between desire and reality, between precept and practice, was the secret of all those lives, which were unable to escape from the fierce necessities of their times and surroundings except by shutting themselves up in monasteries or devoting themselves wholly and solely to religion.

Thus it is that in books written by men of those days, who were not moralists by profession as were



*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

THE DEVIL, BY GIAMBOLOGNA, AT THE CORNER OF THE VECCHIETTI PALACE, IN THE OLD MARKET.

[*To face page 97.*

priests and monks, we find good thoughts and moral counsel mingled with advice of the most utilitarian description. Moreover, in an age when the struggle for life was fought out almost man to man, they would have felt disgraced even in the eyes of their own children and familiars if they had failed to show themselves shrewd and crafty and in all ways well able to defend themselves.

Shrewdness, and above all, craftiness, is still held to be a valuable quality in the business world. In the matter of morality the merchants of to-day (and not only Italian merchants) do not differ very greatly from those of the *Trecento* and the Renaissance. Only modern merchants are more sincere, and not being obliged to keep up religious appearances, they do not trouble themselves to give good advice and are ashamed to commit to paper the business methods they may find it needful to employ.

What marvel, then, that a preacher, in order to attract a congregation and not be obliged to address an empty church, announced that he would proclaim from the pulpit that usury is not a sin but a help? And so he did, all through Lent and on Palm Sunday to a large and attentive congregation. What we moderns term "log-rolling" was the order of the day. Families widened their borders and strengthened their connections by these means, usually favoured by matrimonial alliances, for capital was the one and only basis of safety, and this was upheld by a whole mass of laws and privileges. The father was the

despot master of all his personal property. He could leave it to whomsoever he chose, to collateral relations or to some pious foundation, nay, even to those children whom love had brought into his house ; and this he could do by will, a matter now impossible in continental countries, though still possible in England, where the *Code Napoléon* does not obtain. From this fact we can realise the important place that lawyers and clerks then occupied, for disputes about wills were quite common occurrences. A wife inheriting *ab intestato* had a right only to a fourth of her children's goods, and in reality only to mere nourishment. Everything conspired to preserve the integrity of capital and prevent it from leaving the family, the firm, and the commune. It is a point that cannot be too much insisted on. Inside that society of merchants a greed for gain was the supreme law of every action. It would be useless to look for the sentiment that inspires the modern family, where for woman is reserved so noble a *rôle*, such honourable and tender offices. Those poor Florentine mothers had to be contented with such humble activity as the tyranny of their husbands permitted them, and to live, or rather to drag out their lives in those gloomy, squalid houses, taking care of the children, visiting the churches, and confessing to the friars their manifold sins of desire. The daughters —those girls with whom to-day we take such pains— were then never even taught to read. " If it is a girl, put her to sew and not to read ; it is not good that

THE FRESCO OF THE MONASTERY OF LECCETO, SHOWING GAMBLERS AND KEEPERS OF GAMING-TABLES.

[*To face page* 98.

a woman should know how to read unless you wish to make her a nun," thus counsels Paolo di Ser Pace da Certaldo. The convents were then, and for centuries after, the sole refuge for these poor wretches. They were also a providence for prolific families. To have twenty or more children seemed the most natural thing in the world. If they lived it was said, "Heaven be praised"; and if they died, "For everything be Heaven praised, Amen." In the memoranda, in domestic chronicles in the time of great mortality, were registered in such terms the deaths as well as the births, with a serenity that would seem cynicism indeed to loving mothers of to-day.

These documents also hand down to us indisputable proofs of a singular fact—that is, the intrusion in the family of a new element that obscures the vaunted purity of the morals of those past days. Benevolent critics find an excuse for this in the great mortality caused by the plague among both city and country dwellers, and also in the fact that the prospect of small wages was not enough to induce the men and women of the people to go out as domestic servants; hence it was necessary to look to foreign commerce to supply the deficiency. But this reasoning hardly holds. Rather, we think, it was the trade with the East, the vagabond life led by the merchants and their ever-increasing wealth, that caused that traffic in slaves of both sexes which lasted through two centuries, from the beginning of the thirteenth century onwards. Oriental slaves bought as live goods, generally through Genoese,

Venetian, and Neapolitan brokers, were chiefly Tartars, Greeks, Turks, Dalmatians and Circassians, and do not seem to have been archetypes of beauty. The registers in which the notaries marked down, together with the name and age, the price and description of the wares, "the points" of the necks and faces of the slaves bought and sold, bear witness to this circumstance; nearly all had olive complexions, though some were found who had rosy skins and were florid and fair. The faces never seemed to lack some special and distinctive mark—some were pitted with small-pox, some had moles, others were scarred; the nose was generally squat and flat, the lips thick and prominent, the eyes dull and small, the forehead low and freckled. To these pen-sketches made by pedantic and precise lawyers some portraits correspond that are still extant of these women. In a rare and curious book, the memoranda of Baldovinetti, in which this ancestor of the famous painter used to illustrate by drawing his jottings, there are preserved for us the portraits of three slaves he bought in the years, 1377, 1380 and 1388: "Dorothea, a Tartar, from Russia, eighteen years or more of age; Domenica, of white skin, from Tartary; Veronica, sixteen years old, whom I bought almost naked from Bonaroti, son of Simon de Bonaroti"—that is to say, from an ancestor of Michael Angelo. These three—Dorothea, Domenica and Veronica—could, when a little older, have easily served as models to the future Buonarroti for his "Three Fates." Such women, ugly or

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

THE *LOGGIA* OF THE BIGALLO.

[*To face page* 100.

beautiful, entered the houses of the rich Florentines to perform the most humble services and to take care of the children. They caused much anxiety on every account to the poor house matrons. Pucci, in one of his sonnets, tells us that the slaves had the best of it in everything, and better off than any one, check-mating their mistresses. He maliciously explains some reasons, and tells that they often knew how to play ugly tricks on their mistresses, who, as Alessandra Macinghi, the mother of the Strozzi, confessed some years later, would avenge themselves by laying hands on these same slaves. Still, pests though they were, it seems the families could not do without them. They were the nurses, the maids-of-all-work, of their day; and Alessandra wrote to her son Filippo when at Naples: "Let me remind you of the need we have of a slave, and, if you have the opportunity, give orders to have one bought: ask for a Tartar, for they are the best for hard work, and are simple in their ways. The Russians are more delicate and prettier, but, according to my judgment, a Tartar would be best." Nor could Madonna Alessandra have found any one who could execute her commission better than Filippo, who already had with him for a long while a slave who knew how to work well, and about whom his mother wrote, April 7, 1469: "Andrea as well as Tomaso Ginori, who are now with you, came to see us on Easter Day, and told me many things about your household, and especially about Marina, and the many pretty ways she has with you." And a year

later, in an ironical tone, she says, "I send you the towels; be careful that Madama Marina does not make them disappear," from which we gather that by cunning and pretty ways these women knew how to win over their masters and become madam. They even obtained, by faithful labour, good behaviour, and general aptitude, many a liberal testamentary bequest. It was yet worse when the bartered blood of Tartars and Russians mixed with that of this pure, ancient, and free race.

But let us return to the chaster atmosphere of the family, into which, with accumulated riches, there entered also, alas! those poisonous germs which later on were destined to corrupt and corrode Italian life and conscience. Between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a great change occurred. The renovation of manners and customs, already panting towards a freer life that became entirely unbridled in the Renaissance, had weakened faith and discouraged religion. It seemed as though the people no longer understood any but worldly pleasures. The letters of Mazzei bear witness to this; the good notary of Prato is the wise man of "rough soul and frozen heart." His friend Datini, to speak frankly, is the most detestable type of merchant to be found in his day. Ser Lapo is an ascetic spirit, a man of good and ancient faith, and a convinced moralist. In his letters we seem to see the rebellious sinner, struggling against the holy man who seeks to lead him to a peaceful death and the redemption of his earthly errors. It is the fight between the

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

PORTRAIT OF FRANCESCO DATINI.

(*To face page* 102.

religious sentiment and the moralistic spirit of the new age that radiated in the glory of the Renaissance, but which, after a wonderful moment of splendour, left behind it in the souls of Italians a black and deadly void. Out of this darkness the modern man was to arise later on, purified by these centuries of servitude, and matured by many vigils of thought.

But we have again wandered from the family. Let us look in once more upon the Florentine house, out of whose windows "the loving slaves shook the dust from their masters' belongings every morning, looking fresher and happier than the rose," as a poem of the period has it—this house where the wife barely passed in happiness even the very first months of her married life : later on she merely numbered the years that sped by the names of the children who grew up around her, each of whom recalled to her one of her husband's long absences, when he had gone away to trade far off beyond the mountains and over the seas. The youthful freshness of these women faded quickly, and, as Sacchetti writes, the most beautiful among them in a short time "drooped, degenerated, withered in old age, and at last became a skull." It was but natural that they should try to correct nature by art, and repair the ravages caused by domestic cares; and this not merely from vanity. Even great painters like Taddeo Gaddi and Alberto Arnoldi agreed that the Florentine women were the best artists of all the world.

"Was there ever save for them a painter—nay,

even a mere dyer—who could turn black into white? Certainly not; for it is against nature. Yet, if a face is yellow and pallid, they change it by artificial means to the hue of a rose. One who, by nature or age, has a skinny figure, they are able to make florid and plump. I do not think Giotto or any other painter could colour better than they do; but the most wonderful thing is, that even a face which is out of proportion, and has goggle eyes, they will make correct with eyes like to a falcon's. As to crooked noses, they are soon put straight. If they have jaws like a donkey, they quickly correct them. If their shoulders are too large, they plane them; if one projects more than the other, they stuff them so with cotton that they seem in proportion. And so on with breasts and hips, doing more without a scalpel than Polycletus himself could have done with one. The Florentine women are past-mistresses of painting and modelling, for it is plain to see that they restore where nature has failed."

We cannot blame them, nor do we wish to do so. Poor women! this was the only freedom they enjoyed, to masquerade as youthful, happy creatures, to make their faces bright and fresh while their hearts were often weeping at finding themselves supplanted by other women. They also loved to change the fashion and shape of the dresses, and here they were able to give free vent to their ambition. The admirers of the past, beginning with Dante, blame them for so much changeableness, which irritated even the moralising story-tellers and the rulers, not to mention the

hic · iacet · corpus · prudentis · et · honorabilis · viri · francisci · marci · datini · de · prato · cuius · anime · requiescat · in · pace · amen · mcccc · nono · die · xvi · mensis · augusti

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

THE TOMB OF FRANCESCO DATINI, IN THE CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO, PRATO.

[*To face page* 104.

husbands, who would willingly have economised on these extravagant tastes of their wives. Sacchetti has much to say on this theme, over which he grows eloquent. He writes in his virtuous indignation how "some women had their dresses cut so low that the armpit could be seen. They then jumped to the other extreme, and made the collars come up to their ears. The girls who used to go about so modestly have entirely changed the shape of their hood, so as to reduce it to a cap, and with this headgear they wear around their necks a collar to which are attached all sorts of little beasts, that hang down into their breasts. As for their sleeves, they can almost be called mattresses. Was there ever invented a more harmful, useless shape? Could a woman, wearing those things, lift a glass or anything else from the table without soiling both sleeves and table-cloth with the tumblers they upset? Their waists, too, are all squeezed in, their arms are covered by their trains, and their throats enclosed with hoods. One would never end if one wished to say everything about these women, beginning with their immeasurable trains and ending with their headgear. They sit up on the roofs, and some curl their hair, some plaster it down, and others bleach it, so that often they die of cold."

It would seem, however, that this craving for novelty attacked men as well, and was by no means confined to the weaker sex. Poor Messer Valore di Buondelmonte, an old man cut on the ancient pattern, was forced by his relations to change his hood. Every-

body marvelled and stopped him in the street. "Oh, what! is this Messer Valore? I do not know you. What is the matter with you? Have you the mumps?"

At one time it was the fashion to wear such ruffs and wrist-bands that it could be said of the Florentines that they wore water-pipes around their necks and tiles on their arms; whence it happened that Salvestro Brunelleschi, while eating peas with a spoon, instead of putting them into his mouth, put them inside his ruff, and scalded himself. Later on it became fashionable to have the hose divided and crossed in three or four colours. Shoes had very long points, and the legs were so swathed with strings that the wearer could hardly sit down. Most of the youths went without a mantle, and wore their hair down to their shoulders. For the wrist-band a *braccio* of cloth was allowed, and more stuff was put in a glove than in a hood. The old fashions struggled with the new, the newer, the very newest. Everybody was individually capricious. The Florentine people, inquisitive then as now, liked to behold the new dresses, mantles, and gabardines in which their townsfolk were muffled, so that they hardly recognised each other and had to scan one another keenly in the face before friend knew friend. It was a veritable masquerade. This mania finally assumed such proportions that the men, who have always been the law-makers, pondered how they could by legislation put a check upon the "extravagant ornaments of the

*Photo]* [*Alinari.*

FLORENTINE COSTUMES AT THE TIME OF THE DUKE OF CALABRIA.

*(From the fresco by Simone Martini, Chapel of the Spagnoli, Santa Maria Novella.)*

[*To face page* 107.

Florentine women." In 1306 and 1330 the Commune promulgated sumptuary laws, reinforced in 1352, 1355, 1384, 1388 and 1396, when very severe regulations were added. These had again to be revived in 1439, 1456, and once more in 1562. The clergy thundered from the pulpits, the wise men admonished, and some of them, such as Dominici, went the length of furnishing regulations to careful mothers about their own dress and that of their daughters. The story-tellers lashed with their wit this immoderate luxury. Meanwhile the other cities of Tuscany and Italy sent to the Florentine merchants for copies of the above-named regulations in order to include them in their own laws, and constantly repeated their request. At the same time there began a curious contest between the severity of the rigorous legislation and the cunning of the women. These astute ladies did not fight openly; they pretended to bow their heads and merely appear annoyed while in reality they waited for the storm to pass. They were too wise; they knew the world too well not to be aware that laws which are too severe remain ever a dead letter. Whenever and howsoever they could, they sought, if not to annul, at least to evade them. Thus, when the Duke of Calabria came to Florence in 1326, the ladies gathered round the duchess, who was a Frenchwoman, Marie de Valois, and obtained from her the concession that a certain thick yellow-and-white silk braid, which they had worn instead of plaits of hair in front of their faces, should be restored

to them. "An immodest and unnatural ornament," grumbles Villani, who had observed how the inordinate appetite of women triumphs over reasonable and wise men. Four years after, on the 1st of April, 1330, the Florentines deprived their women of every ornament. But even this tempest blew over. Like the women of Flanders, of whom Paradin writes in the *Annales de Bourgogne*, when tormented for the same cause by Thomas Connette, a fanatical Carmelite, they "relèverent leur cornes, et firent comme les lymaçons, lesquels quand ils entendent quelque bruit retirent et resserrent tout bellement leurs cornes; mais, le bruit passé, soudain ils les relèvent plus grandes que devant." And an opportunity of putting forth their horns anew was the coming of the Duke of Athens to Florence in 1342, when the French wore "such wonderfully different dresses," as a contemporary chronicler observes. And here I would pause for a moment to describe the fashions of the time when the young men clothed themselves in such tight and short tunics that in order to put them on they had to be helped by another person—tunics that were belted in at the waist by a band of leather, fastened by a rich buckle, from which they appended a fancifully worked German purse. Their hood was joined on to a short mantle, and ended in a long peak that reached to the ground and which they were able to wrap round their heads when cold. The cavaliers wore close-fitting jackets, with the points of the wrist-band lined with miniver or ermine and trailing on the ground.

Of course the women immediately copied this new caprice. In the frescoes attributed to Simone Memmi in Santa Maria Novella, we can behold these fashions, which had then but just come in, and whence we can gather a faint conception of the magnificent material employed in the making of these gorgeous garments. The *Prammatica* of dress, dating from 1343, which is preserved in the Archivio della Grascia, tells of splendid dresses that were sequestered by the rigour of the law, and marked by the servants of these unfortunate foreign officers chosen by the Commune to apply the laws, with a seal of lead, having on one side half a lily, and on the other half a cross. Here is the description of a forbidden gown which belonged to Donna Francesca, the wife of Landozzo di Uberto degli Albizi, of the parish of San Pietro Maggiore: "A black mantle of raised cloth; the ground is yellow, and over it are woven birds, parrots, butterflies, white and red roses, and many figures in vermilion and green, with pavilions and dragons, and yellow and black letters and trees, and many other figures of various colours—the whole lined with cloth in hues of black and vermilion."

Often instead of letters they had whole proverbs embroidered on their dresses. In those same archives they keep a curious document, telling of those unlucky officials who were obliged to fulfil a duty so ungracious—of those poor *podestà* and captains, squires, judges, notaries, and servants, who came to Florence from the Guelph cities of Lombardy

and the Marches to hold the office of governors, and who had to dispute in their rough dialect with the quick tongues of the Florentine women and their husbands, and were laughed at for their pains by the story-tellers of the city. There is a tale told by Franco Sacchetti narrating the sufferings of a judge, Messer Amerigo Amerighi of Pesaro, "in person most beautiful, and able in his science," who was ordered, while Franco was one of the Priori, to proceed with solicitude to execute certain orders, as usual on the ornaments of the women. The valiant judge set to work, sending around notaries and servants to make the requisite inquisition; but the citizens went to the Signoria and complained that the new *podestà* did his work so well, that never before had the women been so free to dress as they pleased as they were now. Here is the justification of the unfortunate Messer Amerigo:

"My Lords, I have studied all my life, and now, when I thought that I knew something, I find that I know nothing. For, looking out for these ornaments of your women, which, according to your orders, are forbidden, such arguments as they brought forward in their defence I have never before heard, and from among them I should like to mention to you a few. There comes a woman with peaked hood scalloped and twisted round. My notary says, 'Tell me your name, because your hood is scalloped.' The good woman takes down the peaked end, which is fastened to the hood with a pin, and, holding it in

her hand, says, 'Why, no; do you not see it is a wreath?' Then my man goes farther, and finds a woman wearing many buttons down the front of her dress. He tells her that she cannot wear all those buttons. She answers, 'Yes, Messere, I can wear these; they are not buttons, and if you do not believe me look for the shanks, and see, too, that there are no buttonholes.' The notary goes to another, who wears ermine, wondering what she will have to say for herself. 'You wear ermine,' he remarks, and is about to put down her name. The woman says, 'Do not put down my name, because this is not ermine. This is the fur of a suckling.' 'What is this suckling?' asks the notary, and the woman answers, 'It is an animal.'"

The notary does not insist, nor can the Signoria, who, remembering their own women at home, conclude, as they have always concluded at the Palace, by exhorting Messer Amerigo to let things be and to allow the women to keep their false buttons, their suckling's fur, and their belts. They do not wish, perhaps, that the judge from Pesaro should remember the melancholy distich that one of his colleagues of the guild of merchants had written on the margin of his sumptuary statutes :—

> "If there is a person you do hate
> Send him to Florence as officer of State."

Once again one of Sacchetti's stories proves itself a truthful historical document. The Archivio della

Grascia preserves the acts of the Judge of Appeal and Cassation. Among these registers is one written by Giovanni di Piero da Lugo, notary under Ser Amerigo of Pesaro, officer of the Grascia in the Commune of Florence for six months, beginning from March 15, 1384. On that day Amerigo issued a proclamation to recall to memory the punishment inflicted by the law against whomsoever transgressed the sumptuary regulations. On the 27th of March the inquisition on the part of the officials began. When they met a woman with two rings ornamented with four pearls, or wearing a little cap embroidered, or a wreath, or too many buttons on her dress, immediately the unlucky creature was noted down as being in contravention, to use a modern phrase. The sergeant would go to her house with a summons for her to appear before the judge. On the day appointed her husband would put in an appearance on behalf of his wife, who, recognising the error, paid the fine. These things went on for a good while. Later on the women, grown malicious, began those contests recounted with such evident gusto by the story-tellers, but naturally omitted in the register of the notary. The inquisitions grew more rare, the sentences less frequent, and those husbands who appeared before the tribunals began to deny the guilt of their wives with valid arguments. One is too old to be capable of what is imputed to her, another was at home on that day and at that hour, a third is in mourning—and so forth. The protocol

is closed with hardly a sentence registered, the real fact being that the Signoria and the judges, above all, had given themselves up as vanquished—a defeat which is not devoid of the suspicion that those officers and notaries chosen for this hateful magisterial office had allowed themselves to be conquered by the fire of some beautiful eyes and the caresses of some flattering voice. For, inside the cover of a copy of the pragmatic or sumptuary laws of that date still extant in the Florentine archives, do not we read the outpourings of some enamoured heart which proves itself a precious human document embedded among the pedantic quibbles? This is how it runs:—

"The troops of merry friends, the songs so sweet,
The hawks, the hounds, the wanderings full of pleasure,
Fair women, temples, where for love my feet
Were wont on holidays to seek my treasure,
I hate them now, like fire. This thought I meet
Where'er I go,—oh, wretched beyond measure!
Thou dwellest far from me, my love, my own,
My sovereign hope, and I am here alone."

Is this not proof enough to show that the women had found partisans in the very bosom of the magistracy? No wonder their cause was won. But for a short time only, because periodically some fresh charge was made against feminine vanity, and other storms broke out. The poor women, they were really much persecuted! They also encountered terrible adversaries in the moralists of the day, who in their tractates concerning the government of the family

did not cease striking that note. Palmieri is an example of this. Their worst foes, however, were the friars, at that time invaded by a furious desire to purge the world of its sins. Fra Bernardino of Siena, in 1425, continued in Perugia those bonfires of all the worldly vanities which he had initiated the year before in Rome, making great havoc of false hair and other vain adornments, of trimmings and hoods, of dice, cards, gaming-tables, and other such diabolic things, foreshadowing the great fires made by Savonarola in Florence in 1497, which proved of such evil omen to their instigator. Nevertheless, among so many foes staunch partisans were not wanting. In April, 1461, a preacher who had shouted in Santa Croce against the women, also appealed against them in the presence of the Signoria, in the Consiglio dei Richiesti, where no less a matter was discussed than the absolute prohibition of all fashion. On this occasion Luigi Guicciardini, father of the great historian and politician, said that to the remarks of a Milanese who drew evil deductions as to the morality of the Florentine women from their extravagant dress, he had replied that if the dress seemed immodest their acts were quite the contrary.

But these sumptuary laws, re-touched and re-manipulated every now and again, were less onerous to the women than to their husbands, whose purses had to pay the fines. Nor were the regulations confined to the limiting of personal adornment. The luxury and pomp permitted at weddings, baptisms, banquets and

funerals were all rigorously laid down. Thus the number of guests at a marriage could not exceed two hundred; the marriage-brokers had to announce beforehand the names of the guests. The marriage portions were also fixed by law, as well as the nuptial ceremonies. The cook who prepared the wedding dinner was obliged to report to the officers of the Commune the number of dishes which he served. The meats might not be more than three; not more than seven pounds of veal; and the number of capons, turkeys, ducks was also minutely stated in the statutes. So also were the rites to be observed at obsequies, the number of wax torches that might be burned, the clothes the dead were permitted to wear, the dresses of those that followed them; the presents permitted at baptisms: in short, every single little thing that occurred in the daily life of the citizens was minutely and carefully regulated, and whosoever disobeyed these regulations was condemned to pay a heavy fine. For even in those days the municipal government eagerly seized on every excuse in order to tax its citizens, and the study of those citizens, especially of those cunning merchants, was how in every possible way to lighten for themselves by circumvention the burden of these imposts—in fact, to use a phrase of the period, "to steal with honest licence." "The Commune steals so much itself, I may as well steal from it also," is an old saying quoted by Sacchetti, who laments the slow procedure of the Commune, even towards those who desire to

give up to it their goods. "Everybody drew water for their own mill," says Marchionne Stefani, and he too had his own mill to work. They all strove to defend themselves from these charges; "and as it always happens," writes the chronicler, "the heavy large beasts jump and break the nets." Thus Francesco Datini, when dealing with those who ruled the State, took care of number one. In those years when it was necessary that the imposts should be levied ten or fifteen times a year, on account of the wars fought by the arms of the mercenaries and because of the treaties of peace concluded by means of money, whosoever could not accomplish what he wanted by the aid of friendship or favours, arrived at his goal by cunning, like Bartolo Sonaglini, who, when he was about to be heavily taxed, used to go down every morning and stand on the threshold of his own door narrating his evil fortunes and financial difficulties to everybody who passed by, saying, "O brother, I am ruined! I must either disappear from the world or die in prison;" so that when the time came to tax him everybody said, "He is impoverished and will be taken up for debt;" and one said, "He speaks truth, for one morning he did not even dare to come out of his house;" and another remarked, "So he said to me;" and, "Well, if it be so, one must treat him as if he were poor," was the universal decision. Consequently all of one accord lent to him as if he were a beggar or worse. Having thus borrowed, and the danger passed, Bartolo once more

began to come out of his house, saying that he was arranging with his creditors; and in this wise, with much talk, he freed himself from his debts, while many others richer than he were ruined.

The times were ripening. Of the ancient proverbial simplicity amid all this great thirst for gain there only remained as living monuments a few old men greatly respected. Of these Velluti has preserved to us a graphic description that is as living and vigorous as one of the figures painted by Andrea del Castagno :—

"Buonaccorso di Piero was a valiant strong man, and very sure in arms. He performed many a bold and noble deed, whether for his own commune or that of others. So many wounds had he received in wars and fights that he was disfigured by numberless scars. He was a great opponent of the Paterini and heretics. He was of good height, strong-limbed and well built. He lived full one hundred and twenty years, but during the last twenty he was blind from old age. Although he was so old, his fibre was so tough that he could not be thrown, and by taking a young man by the shoulders he could make him sit down. He thoroughly understood all matters of trade and did everything loyally. It was believed that many cloths that came from Milan, of which a great number were ordered, and which were sold before the bales were opened, were dyed here; and I heard that a certain agent, Giovanni del Volpe, seeing that the cloth sold so well, thought of saving for his firm by

dyeing in a cheaper and inferior way, so that after a while these cloths were not so much sought after as before. Inquiring into the reason, it was discovered that it was owing to the cunning of Giovanni ; and Buonaccorso, hearing of this, wanted to kill him. Buonaccorso having lost his sight, mostly stopped at home. Behind his palace in Via Maggio there was a long balcony which went the length of the building, and on this opened three rooms. Here he walked up and down so much every morning that he covered three or four miles. After this he broke his fast with no less than two loaves; then at dinner he ate well, for he was a hearty eater ; and so he passed his life. Now as to how he died: I heard my father say that, wanting to go to the fireplace, he burnt his foot, so that he could no longer take his daily exercise on the balcony, after which he then and there declared himself dead. Now it happened that his son Filippo, my grandfather, took in second marriage Monna Gemma dei Pulci; and Buonaccorso, having that day chatted much, twitting his son, saying that he needed a wife to help him more than he did, and much more such talk, expressed a wish to go from his bed to his couch ; so he called my father and Gerardo his grandson, and as he put his arms round their necks and shoulders to raise himself, suddenly by reason of great age his life failed him and he died."

With the memory of this beloved and good patriarchal image fresh in our minds, let us hurry on to the new era and the new century, whose glorious dawn

already gilded the sky of literature and art. The preliminary signs had made themselves felt in the growth of wealth, in the enfranchisement from the old prejudices as well as from the severe rules of the old way of living, in the egotistical tendencies which prepared the way for the evolution of what we moderns call individualism. By all these signs and tokens we recognise the character of the men and the life of the Renaissance. The affection for a common country and even family was weakened by an acute craving for pleasure; incredulity, scepticism, and sensuality threatened to obtain the upper hand. After the passing away of the dread terrors of the plague, these generations must almost have wondered to find themselves alive. From the beginning of the great mortality of 1348 to the early years of the fifteenth century, the chroniclers register no less than six such epidemics, though some were of comparatively minor deadliness. By consulting the registers of the dead preserved in the archives of the Grascia, it is possible to ascertain that from the 1st of May to the 18th of September, 1400, there occurred no fewer than 10,908 deaths, of which the greater part were children. Of the plague of 1348, besides the classical and splendid description of Boccaccio, we can discover vivid and sad records amid the family chronicles in the diaries and memoranda of the day. It must have been a dreadful and awe-inspiring sight. Giovanni Morelli tells us how in one hour a friend or neighbour was laughing and joking, and the next he was dead. People fell down

dead in the streets and at their benches; fell down dead when alone, without the help or comfort of a human being. Many went mad and threw themselves into the wells or the Arno, or from out of their windows, driven to this by great sorrow or panic or fear. Many and many died unseen, many were buried before the breath had left their bodies. One might see the cross-bearing priests who had gone to fetch a corpse take up two or three on their way to the church. It is calculated that in Florence alone two-thirds of the population died—that is, 18,000 persons. Of the epidemic of 1400 a detailed description is given in a letter of Ser Lapo Mazzei: "Here shops are hardly open any more; the rulers are not at their post; the police are without superiors. No one weeps for the dead." It was an awful visitation; children died, friends, neighbours and relations fell victims; there was no longer any means of recording even the names of the dead. The number of victims who were struck down in the summer alone reached the figure of one hundred a day, and on one day in July it rose to no fewer than two hundred. Of the epidemic of 1420, Gregorio Dati writes in his *Libro Segreto*—that is to say, his diary:—

"The pestilence was in our house. It began with the man-servant Paccino, about the end of June, 1420. Within three days later our slave Martha died. On the 1st of July my daughter Sandra, and on the 5th Antonia. We left the house and went into one opposite. In a few days Veronica died. Again we

moved and went to live in Via Chiara. Here Bandecca and Pippa were taken ill, and on the 1st of August both went to heaven. They all died of the plague. Heaven help them!"

Those who could escaped to Arezzo, Bologna, Romagna, or any city or country where they thought they would be safe. It was the rule to go to any place where the plague had already been. Remedies against the mysterious sickness there seemed to be none. Morelli lays down some rules that to-day would be called hygienic :—

"The pestilence of 1348 was caused by a terrible famine. The year before, it happened that in Florence there was great hunger ; we lived on herbs and reeds, and very bad they were ; all the country was full of people, who went about feeding on grass like beasts, and thus became predisposed to contract the disease, and there was no help for this."

This chronicler counsels people to keep themselves in good condition ; to be careful to eat well and avoid damp ; to spend generously and without stint or economy ; to refrain from melancholy and gloom ; not to think of dull, sorrowful things ; to play, ride, amuse themselves, and be happy.

The survivors from the scourge must have quickly accustomed themselves to the tenor of the new life, once the danger was over. One result of the plague was the institution of processions of "white penitents," resembling those which in the previous century traversed all Europe under the name of "The Company

of the Crushed." Folk left their homes in crowds, both men and women, laymen and ecclesiastics, all mingling together, dressed in white cloaks which covered their faces and wearing a crucifix as their badge. They walked in procession from place to place, singing lauds and supplicating *Misericordia* in loud voices; at night they lay in the open air, and only asked for bread and water. The people of the cities they visited caught their fervour and went in like order to visit other towns. On the appearance of these pious pilgrims every one was moved to repentance; enmities were laid aside, discordant factions were pacified, and the towns put on a show of sanctity. Some vicious persons in Florence sought to profit by this agitation and liberate the prisoners from the *Stinche*, but fortunately they were hindered. Francesco Datini, a merchant from Prato and a great benefactor to his town, though otherwise a man of dubious morality, who ill-treated his wife and preferred his slave in her presence, also went on a pilgrimage in August, 1399, dressed in white linen and barefooted, together with his family, friends, and neighbours. They were twelve in all, and had with them two horses and a mule. On these beasts they put two trunks in which were boxes filled with all manner of good things to eat—cheese of every kind, fresh bread and biscuits, plain and sweet tarts, and other such tit-bits of daily life—so much so that the beasts were quite overladen with the burden of the victuals. This pilgrimage lasted ten days, and went

as far as Arezzo. Wherever they passed they bought eatables. This making of pilgrimages on horseback, well supplied with food, was certainly a gay and comfortable way of doing penance. The more intelligent and incredulous barely respected the outward forms of religion. Datini, for example, only feared the upbraidings and reproaches of his friend and spiritual mentor, Ser Lapo Mazzei. Others, like Buonaccorso Pitti, furnish us with the type of a man of the Renaissance who had no fixed residence, who wandered over the world tormented with inner restlessness; who gambled, lost, and traded; who meddled with commerce and politics, just like an adventurer of the eighteenth century, like Benvenuto Cellini, but without his art and with far less intelligence. A curious, strange type this Pitti, who seemed as though bitten by a tarantula, living by his wits, the intimate of Charles VI., of dukes and princes, who for a wager with the girl he loved rode straight away to Rome without stopping; a great dancer, an inveterate gambler, a brave and loyal cavalier, who in time rose to the highest offices. Burckhardt calls him a forerunner of Casanova; like him, journeying continually in the quality of merchant and political agent, diplomat and professional gambler. He lost and won enormous sums, finding rivals only among princes like the Dukes of Brabant, Bavaria, and Savoy. This was the father of that Luca Pitti who in riches and magnificence rivalled the Medici and tried in all things to vie with Cosimo.

The merchants, grown immeasurably rich, thanks to their traffic, their journeys, their visits to the factories established in all the commercial centres and ports of Europe, had developed into bankers and money-lenders, feeling the times to be ripe when they could tranquilly enjoy the fruits of their exertions. Once the factions quieted that had quarrelled concerning her, Florence, like a lovely, prosperous maiden of good parts and abundant dowry, closed her eyes under the shade of the Medicean laurels, dazzled by the magnificence with which, womanlike, she had allowed herself to be conquered. Now that the families had acquired property, they sought to found houses, they looked out for suitable marriages, which were discussed as though they were political alliances. Alessandra Macinghi degli Strozzi went to mass every morning in Santa Reparata to sit behind the girls whom she would like her son Filippo to marry, and with the eye of a future mother-in-law studied, examined, criticised, and wrote about them to her son, as though the matter in hand were a bargain about a horse. It is true that Alessandra, to our mind, has been too much exalted and praised; she must have had the heart of a merchant, not that of a woman. That she laid hands upon her slaves she frankly confesses herself. This, however, was the custom of the day; it was, perhaps, easy to lose one's temper with those Russians and Tartars. But concerning her charity, we have stumbled on a curious document. It concerns two old people, only survivors of a family of labourers. "Piero and Monna Cilia are

both alive and infirm. I have let the farm for next year, and as I must put it in order, these two old people, if they do not die, must go and beg. Heaven will provide." Nor is this a passing thought ; it was a firm resolve. In a letter written a few months later, we read : "Piero is still alive" (Heaven had already provided for Monna Cilia, it seems), "so he must put up with it and go away and beg. It would be best, of course, if Heaven would take him." Evidently it was not possible to combine good farming with a good heart, and this little incident probably reflects very truly the sentiments of the age in which they were uttered.

But some of those who had increased and multiplied their means showed nobler sentiments and finer feelings. In Giovanni Rucellai we see the perfect type of the Florentine, who appreciated the dignity of the new state in which fortune had placed him ; he had not only the gift of making money, but he also understood how to spend it well, no less a virtue.

"I think," he writes in his *Zibaldone*, "that it has brought me more honour to have spent well than earned well, and brought more contentment to my spirit, especially the work that I have done in my house." He thanks Heaven for having made him "a rational being—a Christian and not a Turk, Moor, or Tartar ; and for having been born in Italy, which is the most worthy and noble portion of Christendom, and in the province of Tuscany, which is the most highly respected amid the provinces of Italy, and,

above all, in the city of Florence, reputed the noblest and most beautiful city, not only in Christendom, but in the whole universal world; and finally, for living in the present age, held to be, by those who know, the greatest that our city has ever seen since it was founded, as well as for living in the time of the magnificent citizen Cosimo dei Medici." He also expresses his gratitude to Heaven for having granted him the favour of becoming allied to this great man, through the marriage of his son Bernardo with Nannina, daughter of Piero and niece of Cosimo—a splendid connection, of which Rucellai was justly proud.

In those days, without fear of the sumptuary laws now fallen into disuse, Florence celebrated the nuptial feasts of her great families with all the splendour she could muster. The wedding of Baccio Adimari and Lisa Ricasoli, which took place in 1420, is represented in a well-known old picture that hangs in the Florentine Academy of Fine Arts. We see the happy couple and their friends dancing to the accompaniment of trumpets and fifes, under a striped awning of various colours. This marriage and that of the Rucellai and Medici furnish us with a graphic picture of life in those days. Fortunately, too, the great old man, in his *Zibaldone*, has embalmed a record of the latter festivity in a description full of loving remembrance, which has become a precious document for the student of the manners and customs of the day. Gilded by the flaming sun

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

THE WEDDING OF BACCIO ADIMARI AND LISA RICASOLI.

[*To face page* 126.

of June, green festoons swung proudly across the street which was the scene of the wedding, festoons that brought into high relief the shields which ornamented the house-fronts, and which were quartered half with the arms of the Medici and half with those of the Rucellai. The rude stones of the palace façade, which Giovanni Rucellai's generosity had caused him to rebuild some years before, choosing as its architect Leon Battista Alberti, acquired a new aspect thus bedecked with bright awnings and festoons that hung from the Doric pilasters of the first floor and over the Corinthian pilasters of the second and third. Opposite the palace, in the little piazza in front of the *loggia*, had been erected a platform in the shape of a triangle; this was covered over to protect it from the sun by a canopy of blue cloth adorned with wreaths, between which peeped the freshest roses. Below, on the wooden planks, were laid tapestries, and precious tapestries also covered the benches placed round for the convenience of those who waited. The ends of the great blue *velarium* hung down here and there to the ground like aerial columns. On one side of that great tent there was a large sideboard, on which glittered silver vessels and dishes wrought by the best gold and silver smiths in Florence. The richness of these adornments presaged the magnificence of the banquet that was preparing. The kitchen had been placed in the street by the side of the palace, where, counting cooks and underlings, fifty persons were at work. The noise

was great ; Via della Vigna was crowded with people from one end to the other. The men who had decked the façade were succeeded by the servants who carried the presents from friends, clients, and relations ; peasants, gardeners, and shop-people brought victuals ; pipers and trumpeters were preparing their music, and the cavaliers were making ready for the tilting-match. That Sunday, June 8, 1466, soon after dawn, the crowd began to arrive from all sides at the palace where the wedding was to take place. There also came, welcome and promising sight to the curious, quartered bullocks, casks of Greek wine, and as many capons as could hang on a staff, borne on the shoulders of two stout peasants ; bars of buffalo-cheese, turkeys in pairs, barrels of ordinary wine and choice sweet wine, baskets full of pomegranates, hampers of large sea-fish, crates of little silver-scaled fish from the Arno, birds, hares, cream-cheeses packed in fresh green rushes, baskets full of sweetmeats, tarts, and other delicate confectionery, prepared by the fair hands of some gentle nun. There advanced slowly, shaking its leafy head as it stood on the cart, drawn by panting oxen, a splendid olive-tree from Carmignano, as well as young oaks procured from the Villa at Sesto, not to mention the flowers that glad season gave in such profusion. The presents, worthy of those who sent them, enhanced the magnificence of the feast, testifying to the love and reverence the donors bore towards the two illustrious families about to be allied by these nuptials. Thus by this

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN THE RUCELLAI CHAPEL, SAN PANCRAZIO.

[*To face page* 129.

marriage old Giovanni Rucellai did away with all suspicion of being an enemy to the Medici faction, which had grown stronger in Florence since the exile of Cosimo. It was a connection planned with much judgment, and which brought as much honour to his family as did the façade of Santa Maria Novella, which he caused Alberti to build, the chapel of San Pancrazio, the Palace, and the beautiful Corinthian *loggia* in Via della Vigna. That majestic old man, with high, open forehead, acquiline nose, and piercing blue eyes, that still look out at us from an old portrait, had a subtle wit. His thick black hair falls in close curls on to his shoulders; a long wavy beard rests on his breast, preserving a few gold threads mixed with the grey of years; his fresh colouring denotes a vigorous old age. We see him seated in a large armchair, covered with fringed crimson velvet, embossed with gold. He wears a dark green tunic, covered by a purple gown with turnovers of crimson velvet; his upward-looking eyes have a far-away gaze, as though he were thinking of things not of this world. The right hand, adorned with a ring set with a large diamond, rests heavily on the arm of a chair; the left, which is open, points to a handsomely bound MS., the title of which is *Delle Antichità*. Beside it are a few open letters with the address, "To the Illustrissimo Signor Giovanni Rucellai." Behind a dark curtain, against a blue background, are painted with much care and diligence the works he had executed in stone and marble, the façade of Santa Maria Novella, the chapel

of San Pancrazio, the Palace and the *loggia*. Thus the picture sums up both the man and his glory, the rich merchant who had become related to Cosimo di Giovanni dei Medici.

Giovanna dei Medici came to her wedding accompanied, as was the custom, by four cavaliers, chosen from among the elders of the city—Messer Manno Temperani, Messer Carlo Pandolfini, Messer Giovannozzo Pitti, and Messer Tommaso Soderini. "I will come" was written on certain cards which were hung on the benches covered with arras, and placed under the gay pavilion; and the bride did come, and on that platform, made soft with rich carpets, the guests danced and played, waiting for the dinners and supper. There came to the wedding fifty gentlewomen richly dressed, and fifty gentle youths in beautiful costumes. The gaieties lasted from Sunday morning till Tuesday evening, and there were meals twice a day. Usually there were asked to each meal fifty persons, including relations, friends, and the chief citizens: so that at the first table there were, counting the women and girls of the house, trumpeters and pipers, about one hundred and seventy persons; at the second and third tables—the so-called low tables—there sat a large number of persons. At one meal they amounted to five hundred. The dishes, those prescribed by custom, were exquisite and abundant. On Sunday morning they had boiled capons and tongue, a roast of meat, and another of small chickens garnished with sugar and rosewater; in the evening, galantine, roast

meat and chickens with fritters. Monday morning, *blancmanger*, boiled capons with sausages and roast chickens ; in the evening the usual courses, with tarts of sugar and almonds. On Tuesday morning, roast meat and quails ; in the evening the usual roast and galantine. At the refreshments there appeared twenty confectioners, who distributed a profusion of caramels made of pine-seed. The expenses of these banquets amounted to above 150,000 francs—an immense sum in those days. There had been bought 70 bushels of bread, 2,900 white loaves, 4,000 wafers, 50 barrels of sweet white wine, 1,500 couple of poultry, 1,500 eggs, 4 calves, 20 large basins of galantine ; 12 *cataste* of wood were burnt in the kitchen fires. Verily it seemed the reign of abundance. On Tuesday evening, some cavaliers invited to the wedding performed jousts, moving from the Rucellai Palace up to the Tornaquinci, and afterwards in the Via Larga under the Medici Palace. The bride received from her different relations no fewer than twenty rings, and six more from the bridegroom—two when he fetched her, two for the espousals, and two on the morning they exchanged rings. From Bernardo she received a hundred florins and some other coin, with which she made herself two handsome dresses, one of white velvet richly trimmed with pearls, silk, and gold, with open sleeves lined with pure white fur ; one of *zetani*, a stuff of very thick silk, trimmed with pearls, and the sleeves lined with ermine. She had also a gown of white damask brocaded with gold flowers, the

sleeves trimmed with pearls; another of silk with crimson, gold and brocaded sleeves, besides other dresses, and over-dresses, so-called *giornee*. Among the jewels given her was a rich necklet of diamonds, rubies and pearls, which was worth 100,000 gold florins, a pin for her hair, a necklace of pearls with a large pointed diamond, a hood embroidered with pearls, and a net for her hair, also worked with pearls. The dowry, which to-day would seem modest, was 60,000 francs, including the trousseau, in which was included a pair of chests with richly worked edges, and several long dresses of different shapes for every-day wear, made of fine stuffs embroidered; also a lawn shift, fashioned out of material that came from Rheims, a hood of crimson cloth wrought with pearls, two caps with silver, pearls and diamonds, a little illuminated missal with silver clasps, and an infant Jesus in wax, wearing a damask dress trimmed with pearls. Besides this, there was cloth in the piece, satins, velvets, and damasks, embroidered cushions, belts, purses, thimbles, needlecases, ivory combs, four pairs of gloves, a Milanese hat with fringe, eight pairs of stockings, three mirrors, a basin and ewer of enamelled silver, an embroidered fan, and many other things specified in detail.

Three years after, in June, 1469, was celebrated with true princely prodigality the marriage of Lorenzo dei Medici and Clarice Orsini, which proved a public feast, a true carnival. "Tu, felix Florentia, nube." We will not stop to describe it, though there is

ample information about it to be found in the account which Piero Parenti sent to his maternal uncle, Filippo di Matteo Strozzi, then living at Naples, the founder of the beautiful Strozzi Palace in Florence, that monument to the greatness of the family. These banquets, with their magnificence, embarrassed many of the gentlewomen invited to them, for they were bound to appear in dresses that would do honour to the dignity of their families, in robes and gowns of costly brocade and damask. Hence Filippo Strozzi's wife, the lovely and good Fiammetta Adimari, a careful woman, took advantage of her husband's absence to feign illness in order not to be present at the feast. We will follow her example, and search instead in contemporary documents for some signs of intimate domestic life, which grew more rare amid so much public show.

It is pleasant to find this in the little letters which the son of that bride and bridegroom, Piero dei Medici, wrote to his father when away from home, he being left to the care of his pedagogue, Messer Agnolo Poliziano. Much may be forgiven to Piero dei Medici for the sake of these infantine letters, written with the unsteady hand of a five-year-old child, in which appeared his first weak efforts at Latin, which his master did not correct. In 1476, then barely five, he wrote from the Villa to his grandmother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, with the petulance of an over-petted, spoiled child: "Send us some more figs, I mean those very ripe ones, and

send us some peaches with their kernels, and other of those things which you know we like, sweetmeats and tarts and some such little things."

In 1478 he tells his father that he has already learned many verses of Virgil, "and I know the first book of Teodoro by heart, and I think I understand it;" he means Teodoro Gaza's Greek grammar; "and the master makes me decline and examines me every day." The year after, he writes more easily: "I wish you would send me some of the best setters that there are. I don't want anything else. The company here, everybody, specially desires to be remembered to you, and so do I. I pray you to be careful of the pestilence and to bear us in mind, because we are little and have need of you." Another time, after a while, he makes use of his Latin to ask for bigger favours. "That little horse has not yet made its appearance" ("Nondum venit equulus ille, magnifice pater"); and he already begins to take a high tone with his younger brothers and sisters. "Guglielmo thinks of nothing else but laughter; Lucrezia sews, sings, and reads; Maddalena knocks her head against the wall without hurting herself; Contessina makes a great noise all over the house." Then he adds, "To give a tone to my letters I have always written them in Latin, and yet I have not had the little horse you promised me, so that everybody laughs at me."

Nevertheless the little horse did not come. "I am afraid something must have happened to the

horse, because if it had been all right you would have sent it to me as you promised. If that one cannot come, please send me another." At last the horse arrived, and a letter full of thanks and promises of good behaviour closes this childish correspondence.

But the curious sketch of Medicean domestic life, which has the country for background, and for stage one of those villas to which they loved to retreat to forget awhile political vexations, brings before us another aspect of the time—that desire for country quiet, the love for the villa and the sentiment for nature which are distinguishing characteristics of the men of the Renaissance. We already see signs of this in Ser Lapo Mazzei, who used to go to Grignano to attend the harvests and the vintage and who trimmed his own vines. Buonaccorso Pitti, like Petrarch, loved to count the trees in his garden; Rucellai was prouder of his villa at Quaracchi, of which he gives us a more loving description, than of his splendid palace; Pandolfini, or the compiler of *The Government of the Family*, sang the praises of country-life; Poliziano wrote a short essay on the theme for his pupils to turn into Latin, and on the background of a flowery landscape he painted the image of the beautiful Simonetta Cattaneo. Lorenzo dei Medici, even in the midst of his greatness as governor, almost prince, knew how to retain a certain benevolent kindness that was quite homely and Florentine; nor did he dislike mingling with the people at the hostelry of the Porta San Gallo. Here

he celebrated the beauties of the rustic maiden Nencia, and he ever retained a certain middle-class sobriety. Borghini tells us that Francesco Cibo, at the marriage of his daughter, was treated by Lorenzo with great simplicity and even parsimony, while his companions, Roman cavaliers and barons, were received sumptuously. The *Magnifico* explained this attitude by saying reassuringly, "These lords I honour as guests and strangers; you, instead, I treat like one of the family." He gave audience to his clients in the streets, by his own fireside, or walking in a friendly manner about the streets of Florence. Florentine to the very core, he did not dislike appearing facetious. At Pisa, seeing a pupil who squinted, he said that he would be the best in the class. Being asked why, he answered, "Because he will read both pages of the book at once, and so will learn double." Still, under this simple appearance were nurtured the designs of a cunning politician, who, as Vettori writes, "By inducing the citizens to devote themselves to art and pleasure, to the protection of artists of every description, he caused them to become the instruments of his future power." Under the Medicean rule palaces and convents rose up, in which antiquities, works of art and costly manuscripts were accumulated. In the gardens artists gathered together; to the supper-parties came poets and philosophers; jousts and tournaments succeeded each other, poetical concourses vied with these feasts, and the political clients of the palace were reinforced by

the great artists from the humble shops. Savonarola, who guessed the secret thoughts of the tyrant, said, "He diverts the people with tournaments and feasts that they may think of themselves and not of him."

Florence in those times beheld new customs come to life, and listened to many kinds of poetry, from the triumphs and masquerades in the streets to the Platonic banquets at Careggi, from Carnival songs and sweet ballads to country-dances and sacred representations. The thoughtless gaiety, and the ease with which both spiritual and material desires were gratified, seemed to compensate the people for their diminished liberty. The gratified city, which had now for so long resounded with lively, festive clamour, gaily welcomed the great Medicean Carnival with its sumptuous banquets, its processions directed by famous artists and ordered by the brotherhoods of the different quarters. Renascent paganism invaded the religious feasts and transformed these processions for its own end. "In Carnival," says Cambi, sadly, "the city was made to seem happy and well-to-do." Folk danced in the New Market, and in the Piazza della Signoria were held shows of wild beasts, when sometimes the lions were let loose in the hope that some terrible scene might take place. But the Florentine lion was so tame, so humble, that it proved as quiet as a lamb. In front of the Medici Palace in Via Larga, *jongleurs* came in crowds to celebrate the triumphs of love. For the arrival of Francesco Cibo, lately married to Maddalena, daughter of

Lorenzo il Magnifico, there were shows in all the shops, pretty and rich things, stuffs and brocade, jewels, pearls, and silver plate, articles of wonderful and surprising beauty. On St. John's Day was performed a beautiful spectacle of clouds and spirits, cars and other fairy edifices, popular contrivances to pass the time, besides all the other gaieties of the season. Magnificent races were held; the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio was red amid the crackling of the fireworks. On the occasion of the coming of orator or at the creation of knights, the noble Signoria was wont to hold solemn ceremonies, of which we find record in the book of Francesco Filarete, herald to the Republic. In 1491, on St. John's Day, Lorenzo had set up fifteen erections representing the triumph of Paolo Emilio after his return from Macedonia, when he brought with him so much treasure that for many years the Romans were free from taxes. It seemed as though the golden age had come back. The Medicean jousts which had inspired Poliziano's muse stimulated the other citizens to commit mad extravagances. Benedetto Salutati, nephew of Messer Coluccio, for the tournament of 1467 put on the housings, head-gear, and other trappings of two horses one hundred and seventy pounds of fine silver, which he caused to be beautifully worked by the hand of Antonio Pollajolo; and around the robes of the sergeants he strung thirty pounds of pearls, the greater part of which were of immense value. Florence beautified itself with splendid palaces; Filippo Strozzi,

*Photo* [*Alinari.*

THE STROZZI PALACE. BY BENEDETTO DA MAJANO.

[*To face page* 139.

on August 6, 1489, laid the foundation of his stately pile, and Guglielmo Gondi, a short time after, followed his example. The people were proud of these new buildings, and good Tribaldo dei Rossi asked his wife Nannina to send him his two children, newly dressed, that he might take them to see the laying of the corner-stone of the Strozzi Palace. "I took," he writes, "Guarnieri in my arms, and told him to look down there. I gave him a coin with a lily to throw down, also a bunch of little damask roses which I had in my hand. I said, 'Will you remember this?' He said, 'Yes.' The children came with our servant Rita, and Guarnieri, who was on that day just four years old, had a new cloak made by Nannina of shot green-and-yellow silk." The children as well as the older citizens must have been struck by the surprising marvels which the Medicean magnificence displayed for their benefit. Every day some new and singular thing occurred—princely jousts and processions, magnificent feasts. De Rossi, a simple chronicler, has kept for us a record of these events. In 1488 there came to Florence, as a present from the Sultan of Babylonia to Lorenzo, a giraffe which was seven *braccias* high, led by two Turks. Great curiosity was awakened in every one, even in the nuns, so that it was needful to send the strange beast around to the convents to be inspected. "It eats everything, poking its head into every peasant's basket, and would take an apple from a child's hand, so gentle is it. It died on January 2, 1489, and everybody lamented it, for it was such a beautiful animal,"

Suddenly, quite suddenly, this easy mirthful life, this dazzling splendour of art and poetry, this thoughtless gaiety, was extinguished in sadness and gloom. A tempest murmured in the distance. The proud Dominican shut up in his monastery of San Marco, far from the uproar of the Carnival, threatened resuscitated paganism with celestial anger. On April 8, 1492, there fell like a public calamity the news that Lorenzo dei Medici was dead. "The splendour, not of Tuscany only, but of the whole of Italy, has disappeared," writes Dei. "The company of the Mazzi laid the body in the sacristy of San Lorenzo, and the following day the funeral services took place without that pomp which is customary for nobles; but simply, devoid of hangings and canopies, with three orders of friars and only one of priests. For no matter how pompous the ceremony might have been, it would always have proved too mean for so great a man."

Thus with lugubrious obsequies in the chill twilight of the Laurentian sepulchre, with the remains of the Magnifico were laid to rest the memories of a whole age radiant with youth and glory. With Lorenzo there disappeared the world of the Renaissance, for but a little time afterwards Tribaldo de Rossi writes: "A letter has come to the Signoria saying that certain youths, gone out in sailing-ships, have arrived at an immense island, to which never before have any people sailed, and which is inhabited by men and women all naked."

A new world had been discovered!

SAVONAROLA IN HIS CELL.

[*To face page* 140.

# TULLIA OF ARRAGON

*Photo]* [*Alinari.*

THE SACRISTY OF SAN LORENZO.

[*To face page* 142.

# TULLIA OF ARRAGON

## I

IN the picture gallery bequeathed to the town of Brescia by Count Tosio hangs a painting by Alessandro Bonvicino, surnamed Il Moretto. Here, standing out from a dark background of laurel branches, is seen the half-length figure of a youthful and very beautiful woman, her head slightly inclined towards her left shoulder and holding in her left hand a long, slender golden rod topped by a sceptre-like ornament. As though weary, she leans upon a square marble pedestal upon which is cut an inscription in Latin; she wears a rich dress of blue velvet, partly concealed by a fur mantle lined with red velvet, and blue ribbons and strings of large pearls are twisted through her hair. A certain Raphaelesque grace unites with the vivid colouring of the Venetian painters in lending charm to the lovely face, out of which look two great pensive eyes—those unforgettable eyes which the love-poets of old used to call "burning stars," but which we moderns describe as "fateful eyes." The face is a pure oval, the ear of perfect

shape; the lightly waving hair is parted in the middle and coiled round the head, the pose of which enables the spectator to admire the splendid line of the neck, rising like a fair white column from the laces which conceal the delicate beauty of the shoulder. The well-shaped hand, issuing also from a frill of lace, is as white as "polished ivory or shining alabaster," and on the tapering fingers with their rosy nails have been bestowed the most careful strokes of the painter's brush.

This portrait, according to long-established tradition, is that of Tullia of Arragon, although the words *Quae sacrum Joannis caput obtinuit*, engraved upon the marble base on which the fair lady leans her arm, have also given rise to the supposition that it represents Salome. In this case, however, laurels would be out of place, and nothing in the portrait itself points to it as being the vindictive daughter of Herodias. But seeing that the picture formerly belonged to a convent of nuns, from one of whom Count Tosio purchased it about the year 1829, some thirty years after the suppression of the religious bodies, it is not improbable that the inscription alluding to Salome was nothing more than a pious fib added by the nuns themselves for the purpose of concealing under a name well known in sacred history one rendered all too famous in profane chronicles.

Bonvicino's portrait must be a good likeness. The beauty of Tullia of Arragon was sung by a chorus of poets from all parts of Italy; whoever saw and

*Photo]* [*Alinari.*

TULLIA OF ARRAGON.

[*To face page* 144.

knew her fell captive to the charm of her appearance, the sound of her voice, the courtesy of her manner, and the sweetness of her words. Her eyes seem to have possessed some magic power; poets declared they were "the torches wherewith Love inflamed all hearts," whilst her "fair golden locks" were the net he spread to catch souls.

Tullia of Arragon was a famous beauty and a poetess of some merit in her day, a lady who figured under her own or fictitious names as the heroine of countless songs, tales, and sonnets. But it was not only as a beauty and a poetess that she was famous, for documents of unquestionable authority place it beyond doubt that she was a woman who, following in the maternal footsteps, turned her beauty to profitable uses. But she was no vulgar courtesan; far from it. Pietro Aretino's portrait of *Zaffetta* might well describe Tullia: "The methods you employ are far removed from any fraud," are his words addressed to her; "I give the palm to you in preference to all others, for you understand better than any how to cover an impudent face with an honest mask, obtaining gifts and praises by wise and discreet means. You are modest in all your affairs, accepting what is given you without violently seizing what is withheld. You do not arouse jealousy by planting suspicion in the minds of those who never thought of it. Lying, envy, and evil-speaking, the fifth element of the courtesan, do not hold your mind and tongue in continual employment. You prize virtue and honour the virtuous,

which is not usually the custom with those who sell their favours for a price."

To pay honour to virtue and the virtuous was also Tullia's custom, for she did not lack the advantages of culture and a good education. Brought up at Siena, whither her mother had taken her in her earliest youth, she acquired the Siennese accent, supposed to be the best in Italy. Boasting that noble blood ran in her veins, she bore herself in public with a certain haughty reserve, whilst her feminine cunning, learnt in the shrewd school of the famous courtesan Giulia Campana, was gracefully hidden beneath the gentle and attractive manners of the poetess and literary woman. She played the lute exquisitively, sang with a charming voice, and often composed verses which still further inflamed the ardour of her numerous admirers. The magical gift of song earned for her the name of "Alma Sirena," and brought her many rhyming praises, not only from the poet Muzio, who played a great part in her life, as will be seen later on, but even from Alessandro Arrighi; and this when, no longer very young, she came to Florence to turn the most sedate and famous heads in the Tuscan literary world.

Thus Tullia's own lovely head was adorned with the poet's laurel wreath, twined above the courtesan's yellow veil, and her position in the world did not prevent her from being honoured and admired by the most elect of spirits, or from holding her own amongst those who knew how to combine literature

with morality. Nowadays we are inclined to pardon a great deal in poets and novelists and not to blame them too severely if, in their thirst after knowledge and experience, they pursue their study of mankind somewhat too far; we may take off our hats in the presence of some genuine and overwhelming love, holding that the fire of passion ennobles and purifies; but we can only regard as a singular phenomenon (only to be explained by the peculiar customs and views of the society of that period) those women who, instead of seeking to raise themselves into a less corrupt atmosphere, persisted in it and even succeeded in drawing down the most exalted minds to their own level, masking vice with a semblance of virtue, but who nevertheless usurped the places and honours which should by rights have belonged only to women with spotless reputations.

At the time of the Renaissance, the spirit of Greco-Latin antiquity had so thoroughly entered into the life of Italian society that it was no longer merely the source of culture and learning, but the supreme aim of existence itself. The universal endeavour was to reproduce the civilisation and culture of the ancients, and the classical authority of Plato and Aristotle was amply sufficient to stamp as correct any divergence from those moral laws which the Catholic Church preached, even if it did not always practise them. The ancients had Aspasia and Diotima, the Athenians paid honour to the *hetaeræ*, therefore it was natural and necessary that the Cinquecento should

have its famous Imperia, Caterina di San Celso, and its Tullia of Arragon. The courtesan of those days was a species of hot-house flower which the refinements of a singular civilisation had caused to bloom in the midst of the literary circles of that worldly society. It may be said, moreover, that she supplied a want, for the literary men, being for the most part either priests or beneficed clergy and therefore celibates, had need of an intelligent woman friend who would give them the feminine sympathy and applause they could not obtain at home. This intelligent sympathy, indeed, was rarely looked for in the family, for the housewife of this time was either a fear-inspiring *virago* with a masculine mind, capable of protecting her virtue by sheer force of arms, or else she was a creature wholly absorbed in domestic matters, with no understanding for anything beyond her prayers and her pantry. Thus men of letters, who sought for charm of mind, for a beauty less austere, who wanted a Muse for their verses and a companion for their merry feastings, turned to the trained and accomplished courtesans, regarding them somewhat as one regards a fair flower whose scent and beauty one enjoys without inquiring how and where it was grown.

The courtesan was a *virtuose;* Aretino says of Tullia that "the girl learned to be *virtuosa* and to speak Siennese," and like the modern *virtuose*, those women who had thus acquired celebrity were able to mix with the most select society without their presence

giving the least offence to any one. Born for pleasure, perhaps even the children of pleasure, to pleasure they made sacrifice, and nearly all the best educated amongst them "knew all Petrarch and Boccaccio by heart, beside innumerable fine Latin verses by Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and a thousand other authors." That their position was considered an enviable one is proved by a letter written by Franco to a Venetian lady, in which she questions whether it were not advisable to train their daughters as courtesans. Truly, the example of the famous Imperia was a dangerous one!

Bandello relates that this Imperia, otherwise known as Caterina di San Celso, "was loved by all the wealthiest and greatest men. Amongst these was a certain Signor Angelo dal Bufalo, a rich and worthy gentleman, who was devoted to her for many years and was ardently loved in return. He gave her a splendidly furnished house, with numerous servants, and her establishment was such that if some stranger had entered he would have supposed it to be the dwelling of a princess. The rooms were hung with velvet and brocade, and thick carpets covered the floors. The walls of the small saloon where she received the visits of any great personages who might go to see her were covered with cloth of gold, richly embroidered, whilst magnificent vases of alabaster, porphyry, and other valuable materials, inlaid and carven trunks and coffers and all manner of precious objects were displayed on all sides. On a table in the middle of the room were musical instruments,

and books both in Latin and Italian, for she had been taught by Domenico Campana and had so profited by her lessons that she composed sonnets and madrigals by no means badly." Other women in her position were perhaps equally well educated, though less fortunate in their surroundings, and they all hoped to end like Caterina di San Celso, for she eventually married Messer Gian Francesco Ghiringhello, a wealthy gentleman of Milan.

We must perforce conclude that the position of Tullia and her companions was such as to justify them in hoping for the best possible good fortune. The most respected and exclusive people who had at any time been brought into contact with them strove to preserve their friendship, because, as Burckhardt observes, "passion always leaves behind it an ineffaceable trace." It is not surprising, therefore, to read in Aretino's *Ragionamento* how Zoppino, turned monk, describes to his friend Lodovico the manner in which these ladies fill the churches: "For if Lorenzina goes," he says, "ten gentlemen accompany her, ten others follow and twenty wait for her without; if Matrema goes, she is accompanied not only by ten maids and as many pages and servants, but also by great princes, that is to say, by marquises, ambassadors, and dukes; Beatrice is attended by as many nobles, Don this and Don the other. La Greca has her counts and her lords, Beatrice has her prelates, such as bishops, poets, and abbots. And Tullia, with many beardless youths. . . ."

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

PIETRO ARETINO, BY TITIAN.

[*To face page* 150.

A census of Rome, taken during the pontificate of Leo X and brought to light by Signor M. Armellini, who judges its date to be somewhere between the years 1511 and 1518, gives us a true picture of that which was called by Aretino *the women's city* at the time when Giulia Campana, Tullia's mother, was famous there. It is only necessary to read the simple, unpolished prose of this official document, wherein are numbered, district by district, parish by parish, all the houses and shops, and the respective proprietors and inhabitants, with their nationalities, professions, trades, and positions, to obtain a clear idea of the social life of that period, and to behold almost with our own eyes that Rome of Leo X which gave refuge to the fugitive Pier Soderini, who dwelt "near unto Santo Biasio de Monte Cetorio," in his own house, which, by the irony of chance, was situated on the very spot where now stands the building of the Italian Parliament!

If it were a question of depicting Roman life at the time when "Madonna Vanozza, mother of the Duke Valentino," lived in the Parione, near Santo Stefano in Piscinola, "in a house divided into three shops with three dwellings above," the shops being let to two cobblers whose wives were washerwomen, and a Florentine carpenter; whilst in the dwellings above lived "Madonna Lactantia, curiale; Margarita, married woman, curiale; and Madonna Montesina, a poor old Spanish woman;" and in the house adjoining a blacksmith and a woman of doubtful employment,—

we should require so immense a canvas that in order to paint thereon the thousands and thousands of contrasting figures we should have need of that brush whose immortal creations decorate the *loggie* of the Vatican. But a very few facts taken from the census will suffice for our purpose.

The courtesans registered in this census were exceedingly numerous and of varying ranks and conditions. The well-known *hetaeræ*, however, are easily recognised amongst the crowd, and one of these, Tullia's mother, lived in Campo Marzio, in the parish of San Trifone, in a house belonging to the Convent of Sant' Agostino. She seems to have dwelt in good company, and, being a star of the first magnitude of this particular firmament, she had, as satellites, "Madonna Angela of Piacenza," who lived in the next house, "Madonna Dionora Vacchè of Castille, Madonna Mascia de Agnelli of Rome, Madonna Julia of Venice, Madonna Catherina the Spaniard," and others, who lived close by. Towards the garden of San Biagio, in the house belonging to the English hospital, lived another famous lady of the same persuasion, with a tavern-keeper below; in Santa Maria in Posterula, next to "the house of Messer Raphaelo, where he dwelt," lived Madonna Prudensia, while near at hand was Madonna Lucretia Scarratona, mentioned by Pietro Aretino as being like one of the courtesans of the good old time, "who tore up rich brocades as though they were merely rags." And so the list goes on, with countless names impossible to follow,

names divided into classes ranging from the rich and fashionable *hetaeræ* of recognised position (amongst whom figures Tullia herself), down to the miserable creatures who also plied the trades of sempstress or laundress.

The Leonine census thus clearly corroborates what we have already asserted. The most exclusive society of that time opened its doors to those new Aspasias from whose bright eyes poets drew inspiration and whose marble limbs served as models for painters and sculptors. The courtesans were distributed throughout all the districts and parishes of Rome; they lived in the sumptuously furnished palaces of the nobles, side by side with the dwellings of gentlemen, in houses belonging to religious bodies. Their position was often so prosperous and comfortable that they themselves owned houses which they let to others. Usually their families lived with them, without any scruples whatever, and we find them mixing with people of every rank and position. Even the priests were not afraid of being brought into contact with them; at Arenula, "in the new houses opposite to Santa Catherina," we find, beneath the same roof, "Messer Isacco Francioso, Madonna Maria and Madonna Lisabetta Todesche, and Madonna Giovanna, Spanish courtesan"; and together with these were "a singer and his wife and Messer Biagio, a beneficed priest of St. Peter's." In Campo Marzo, near the garden of San Biagio, the combination is even more curious, for here dwells "the bishop who lives in the

house of the Medici, and below him Cosmo Malacollo keeps a school for boys, and next door to him dwell Vascha and Donna Speranza, courtesans."

Such were the social and moral conditions into which was born Tullia of Arragon, by the banks of Father Tiber.

## II

FOR a long time there was considerable doubt as to the birth-place of Tullia of Arragon, but careful researches have now established the fact that she first saw the light in the Eternal City, and that her mother was that Giulia Campana of Ferrara who, on account of certain qualities, anything but poetical, was numbered amongst the most notorious women in Rome. But her very name is now almost forgotten; indeed, it is only remembered because of her amours with the Cardinal of Arragon, and because of a witty reply made by her to an insult and recorded by Domenichi in his *Facezie*, a reply which bears witness to her readiness of tongue if not to the perfection of her manners. The Papal government, it appears, from motives of economy and for the edification of timid souls, caused the tributes it exacted from women of ill-fame to be devoted to the paving of a certain street. As Giulia Campana was walking down that street one day she met a gentlewoman and chanced to knock up against her, whereupon the gentlewoman grew angry and began to abuse Giulia. Then said the latter, "I ask your pardon, Madonna, for I know

well that you have more right in this street than I." The answer was evidently approved of at that time and gained for Giulia the reputation of having a witty tongue, since we find it repeated in one of those books read by the best society for the brightening of its intelligence !

It was probably in order to seek a fortune equal to her avarice that Giulia Campana exchanged the banks of the Po for the Seven Hills. Nor was she disappointed ; indeed, as the poem relating her adventures declares, Fortune smiled very kindly upon her ; for, as she was walking one day by the side of the Tiber, she chanced to meet an eminent ecclesiastic whose consecrated locks were covered by the purple hat and whose covetous eyes were instantly arrested by her charms. The adventurous shepherd who discovered this pretty lamb was Luigi of Arragon, son of Errico, Marquis of Gerace, a natural son of Ferdinand I., of Arragon, King of Naples, and of Diana Guardato. Luigi, whose mother was Polissena, daughter of the Marquis of Cotrone, was born in Naples in 1475, and became Marquis of Gerace on the death of his father in 1478. In 1492 he married Battistina Cibo, and then, being left a widower whilst still very young, he entered the Sacred College of Alexander VI., in 1493. This fact, however, was not officially promulgated until 1497, perhaps because of the differences which had arisen between Alexander and the House of Arragon, and the disturbances occasioned in the kingdom by the expedition of Charles

VIII. Luigi died in 1519, at the age of forty, and was buried in the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, where his tomb may still be seen, with the inscription placed there by his executor, Cardinal Franciotto Orsini.

The date of Luigi of Arragon's first arrival in Rome is uncertain, as also that of his meeting with Giulia Campana. But as Tullia was already well known in 1527, at the time of the sack of Rome, she could scarcely have been less than twenty years old, whence it may be inferred that it was somewhere about 1505 that the amorous prelate met with the lady who was destined to make the name of Arragon famous in the annals of the courtesan world.

Of Tullia's youth little is known. An unreliable manuscript biography by Zilioli says that "she spent her earliest years amongst the delights and comforts of a fine fortune which had been bequeathed her by her affectionate father." Between 1515 and 1518, before his death, Giulia, as we have seen, lived in Campo Marzo, in a house belonging to the convent of Sant' Agostino, and certainly neither mother nor daughter were in money difficulties then. Harder times followed the death of their generous protector, and it was probably then that the unnatural mother bethought herself of turning to good account the beauty with which nature had largely endowed the daughter. According to Muzio, they lived for some time in Siena, perhaps during the years 1517 and 1518,

when the Cardinal of Arragon undertook his long journey through Germany, Switzerland, Flanders, Picardy, and other French provinces, a manuscript account of which, written by Don Antonio de Beatis, is preserved in the National Library at Naples. At Siena Tullia was probably able to pay more attention to her studies, in which, if Zilioli is to be believed, "she made such progress that while she was still a child she astonished learned men by saying and writing both in Latin and Italian things worthy of the best scholars."

From the *Ragionamento* of Aretino we gather that Giulia left Rome after 1519, and settled first in Siena with her daughter. She appears to have still been possessed of some of the property left her by the Cardinal, together with savings amassed during past times of prosperity; but she soon perceived that it was time to cede the ground to her daughter, and desired that she must make her first appearance upon the greatest stage in the world.

So we find them both in Rome again, where the royal name she bore and her many accomplishments soon brought her into notice. Giulia knew her public and all the tricks of the trade, and she knew that as the supposed daughter of a Cardinal Tullia would have all the attractions of forbidden fruit. The girl was no vulgar courtesan; she was noble, because, albeit not pure, the blood of Arragon ran in her veins; in refinement, education, and intelligence she was the equal of those gentlemen who had seen her as a

child in the house of her protector, who, on his side, as was the custom of the time, saw no reason for making a mystery of his amours and their charming offspring.

Tullia found it easy, therefore, to choose her adorers from amongst the persons of exalted position, the scholars and scientists who gathered round her, attracted by her charm both of mind and body, and doubtless maternal counsels were not lacking as to the most advantageous manner of conducting herself in the difficulties of a first appearance.

Tullia was one who ever strove towards better things; at least she always tried to persuade herself, and to make others believe, that she possessed a soul above her station, and that hard fate and dire necessity alone had forced her into such a position. She gave herself the airs of a gentlewoman and poetess constrained by circumstances to pursue an uncongenial occupation. Like the famous Florentine Secretary who put off his everyday garments when he discoursed familiarly with the great men of the past, Tullia dropped her embroidered veil when she took up her lute, and this (if we are to believe Giraldi's indictment) may explain the double reputation which she bore, as she could reveal herself either as the Muse or the beauty, according to the circumstances of the moment. Perhaps she was a woman clever enough to appear a sphinx to all, as indeed she seems to any one who seeks now to reconstruct her character from the sparse record and documents to be found

concerning her. It is quite possible, for the cunning of women more than equals the credulity of scholars!

Tullia's house was the meeting-place for the choicest spirits to be found amongst gentlemen, scholars, and *litterati* of all persuasions. Here learned and witty discussions took place upon the most exalted themes, and the bright sayings of this select company were often worthy of record. One scene has been described by Domenichi as follows:

"A company of gentlemen and *virtuosi* were declaring one day in the house of Tullia of Arragon that Petrarch, being a clever man, had recognised the value of the subjects treated by certain ancient Provençal and Tuscan rhymers and had made use of them himself. In order not to bring the discussion to an end too soon, several persons feigned to hold a contrary opinion, and as they were thus disputing there arrived Umore of Bologna, who took off his cap and sat him down amongst them. Having heard the subject of their conversation he was asked for his opinion, whereupon he answered thus: 'It appears unto me, sirs, that Petrarch being a man of ingenious and ready intelligence, used the verses of the ancient poets as the Spaniards use the caps which they steal during the night; for in order that they may not be recognised and the thieves punished, they do ornament them with some new and elegant decoration and then wear them openly.' Now there chanced to be a Spanish gentleman present, and hearing his nation thus attacked he turned to Umore and said,

'What is that you say of the Spaniards, sir?' 'Are you, then, a Spaniard?' answered Umore in feigned astonishment, and instantly calling a servant he had his cap brought him and put it on again. All the company laughed at this action of Umore's, who, instead of showing regret at having offended the gentleman, as another might have done, doubled the offence with an excellent grace."

This anecdote, the Spaniard's forbearance and the standing of the persons assembled, shows in what respect the hostess was held, and the little picture thus drawn with few strokes by Domenichi recalls that miniature by Clovio in the Vatican, representing a scene from the *Book of the Courtier* (*Cortegiano*) of Messer Baldassarre da Castiglione and showing ladies and gentlemen seated around the walls of a room, opposite a richly decorated fireplace whereon lighted torches were placed. It is very probable, however, that the fair hostess herself, or at most her mother, were the only representatives of their sex at these receptions, for Tullia preferred to be the sole recipient of homage and praise, and certainly brooked no rivals in her kingdom.

Another curious document relating to Tullia's life in Rome is furnished by a letter written on February 14, 1531, by Francesco Vettori to Filippo Strozzi, who had been called to Rome by order of Clement VII to get back some jewels and to revise his accounts. But the jewels and the accounts were mere excuses, for the Pontiff was planning to make

Duke Alessandro de' Medici the absolute ruler and prince of Florence, and he wanted Filippo Strozzi to help him in devising a means of introducing a form of government, or rather a condition of affairs, into Florence, wherein the magistrates of the city would govern nominally but the Duke have actual control of everything. In order to allay the suspicions aroused by his past conduct, Strozzi hastened to show himself zealous in furthering the Pope's designs, and by way of preparing the ground for his return to Florence and the carrying out of the decisions arrived at in the secret consultation with the Pope, he wrote to Vettori begging for his help and advice. Vettori's answer contained an amplification of the plans he had already drawn up at the Pope's request for the better government and organisation of the city, and concluded with these words:

"You write to me with Tullia beside you, but I would not have you also read my reply with her by your side; you are in love with her and hold her to be a woman of spirit, but I do not desire that she should injure me with any of those whom I have named in my letter. I do not presume to admonish Filippo Strozzi, although, if admonitions corrected faults, ye would take no offence thereat; but I have heard of I know not what challenges being sent out, which have troubled me, thinking how that a man such as you are, forty-three years old, was desirous of fighting for a woman's sake. And although I do think ye would be as successful with

*Photo]* [*Alinari.*

FILIPPO STROZZI.

[*To face page* 162.

arms as ye are with letters, and all other things to which ye give your mind, I would not that ye should at this present time expose yourself to the danger of fighting for so trifling a cause ; moreover, I would remind you that of men such as yourself but few are born in each century, and I do not say this out of flattery. Settle your affairs and then return unto us here."

This Filippo Strozzi who wrote about the most secret political business with Tullia by his side, and who esteemed her intelligence so highly that he would even read her Vettori's letter, who loved her to the extent of sending out challenges in defence of her honour : this gentleman of forty-three who went straight from a secret council with the Pope, the Cardinals Salviati and Ridolfi, Jacopo Salviati and Ruberto Pucci to the *salon* of the courtesan, is the genuine type of the Florentine gentleman of the time described by Benvenuto Cellini in his *Life*. Amongst all the young men of his day and city, he was the most elegant in dress and the foremost in the pursuit of pleasure, and his wife, Clarice de' Medici, suffered numerous rivals in his affections. A biographer of his describes him as being more addicted to amusements than was advisable, and not only for his own pleasure, but in obedience to the wishes of his superiors and friends. He was present at every public or private spectacle where women were invited, for he was their ardent admirer and easily fell in love, though chiefly with those who

were distinguished for their grace and their manners rather than for their beauty. He was passionately fond of music and a good singer, and thought it in no wise beneath his dignity to sally forth with his brother Lorenzo and other companions singing psalms and lamentations in public during Holy Week, or to go masked from house to house in Carnival time singing merry songs. Various translations and madrigals of his which have been set to music prove, too, that he could write creditably both in prose and verse.

The man's character is apparent from this description of him. He was a great admirer and follower of women, though never falling very deeply in love; a great musical amateur, a frequenter of masked balls and other amusements, and very fond of literature and poetry. Tullia could not fail to attract him, and it was only natural that a similarity of tastes should awaken in them such sympathy that they were nearly always together, and that he who was afterwards vanquished at Montemurlo should be ready to fight even for such a forlorn hope as Tullia's good name.

It is a fact, however, that the name of Strozzi does not appear as one of Tullia's six champions in a challenge which is preserved with many other documents in the Rinucciniana and which belongs to that year, although Ferrai placed it in 1539. This challenge has never been published, and is worthy of perusal, both as being an example of that

type of document and a proof of the manner in which the lady knew how to sharpen both the wits of scholars and the swords of the duellists. The composition runs as follows:

"The undersigned gentlemen do hold that virtue alone doth bestow immortality upon every generous soul, through everlasting fame saving it from oblivion, which the fleeting and uncertain memory of man is not able to do; and they hold that this should be deservedly loved, reverenced and exalted to the utmost of human power, and all the more so when it is found in a person endowed with every grace and every gift of fortune or nature. Wherefore, being true upholders and lovers of this virtue, and for the sake of truth, which every noble heart should ever strive to protect, bringing it forth to the light and causing it to shine with the full splendour of the sun wheresoever it is found to be hidden or obscured, and not moved by any other passion or motive, the undersigned do offer themselves, without prejudice to the honoured laws of military discipline, unto all the world for the purpose of valiantly maintaining upon a certain day that their lady and mistress, the illustrious lady Tullia of Arragon, is by reason of her infinite virtues the most meritorious of all women of the past, present, or future age. And in order that any person who is jealous of her immortal glory, and speaketh or thinketh of her in manner different from what is due, may speedily declare himself, the undersigned

do declare themselves ready to uphold her cause according to the rules of the tournaments of the ancient and glorious knights. And thus, even if they were not already sufficiently evident and clear, the inestimable merits of the aforesaid lady will be made known as they deserve, and in the same way the courage and valour of her servants will become more famous and indisputable. Wherefore, all persons will be constrained to confess that, as there is no knight superior in power to the undersigned, so likewise no lady like or equal unto the aforesaid lady doth exist, or hath ever existed, or ever can exist in the future.

"I, Paulo Emilio Orsini, do bind myself to uphold what is contained in this writing.

"I, Accursio Mattei, do bind myself to uphold what is contained in this writing.

"I, Brunoro Neccia, do bind myself to uphold what is contained in this writing.

"I, Alberto Rippe, do bind myself to uphold what is written above.

"I, Marco of Urbino, do bind myself to uphold what is contained in this writing.

"I, Bernado Rinuccini, do hold myself bound by what is written here above."

Filippo Strozzi was not, therefore, one of the six who thus proclaimed themselves champions of Tullia's honour, declaring her more excellent than any other woman of the past, present, or future. Perhaps such ostentatious partisanship went against

his Florentine good taste, or the favours shown him by the indulgent lady had taught him sufficient concerning the catalogue of her many virtues!

It is probable that if Vettori had known her more intimately he would have spared Filippo the sermon he wrote him. This was not without its good effect, however, as we have seen, and Filippo returned to Florence towards the April of 1531, in all probability grateful to his friend for having persuaded him against taking up arms in defence of Tullia of Arragon. He forget her in other and nobler affections, and to her he was but one name in a long list of admirers; nor is it likely that her tears flowed when, seven years later, he met his tragic fate and killed himself in prison.

Documentary evidence is so scarce that it would be impossible to follow Tullia in her various wanderings. In his poem *Argia*, wherein he deplores the death of Penelope, Tullia's sister, and which is but part of a large work, the poet Muzio tells us that Giulia Campana's second daughter was born in Adria about 1535 and died in Rome when thirteen years old. In 1535, Tullia and her mother were in Venice, and again in 1537, when Speroni introduces her into his *Dialogo* as engaged in a love-affair with Bernardo Tasso under the eyes of two other aspirants, Niccolò Grazia and Francesco Maria Molza. Tasso afterwards freed himself from Tullia's bonds and pretended that he was obliged to quit Venice in order to return to his master in Salerno. Instead,

however, he departed on a delicate errand entrusted to him by the Florentine exiles. He went to Spain to negotiate with the ministers of the Emperor Charles V., for the liberation of his predecessor in Tullia's affections, namely, Filippo Strozzi, who was a prisoner in that same Florentine fortress which had in part been built with the money he himself had lent, the erection of which had been advised by Francesco Vettori in the letter already alluded to. Truly, fate plays cruel tricks! Tullia, meanwhile, fearless and unconscious, replaced old loves with new ones; cold, impassive, and statuesque, she went upon her way, and neither in her eyes nor in her verses do we find the trace of a single tear.

As we have seen, she was in Rome in the year 1531; early in 1535 she was in Adria, where her sister Penelope was born; in 1537 she went to Ferrara and thence to Venice, if Speroni is to be believed. After a stay in Siena, she went to Florence in the beginning of 1546, remaining there some two and a half years, and after various other wanderings she died in Rome in March, 1556. The poet Muzio, in his eclogue *Argia*, describes the adventures of Penelope, who, with her mother, always followed the fortunes of Tullia, and gives us in verse the itinerary of these three wandering women. And since it has been proved that his poetical information agrees with that of more matter-of-fact documents, we may go back a few years and take up the thread of the story again at Ferrara.

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

VITTORIA COLONNA, BY MUZIANO.

[*To face page* 169.

## III

SOME time before June, 1537, Tullia arrived in Ferrara, to which town, in the April of this same year, had come Vittoria Colonna, in all probability for the purpose of restoring peace to the soul of Renata d'Este and reconciling her with the Duke. During this Lent the Siennese preacher, Bernardino Ochino, had been profoundly moving all Ferrara with his inspired words, spoken from the pulpit with "marvellous fervour" and a "perfect voice," and the Marchioness of Pescara, who was a staunch supporter of the Capucin friar, had found another reason for her journey to Ferrara in helping him to establish a house for his Order in that place. Tullia, who vied with the Duchess for the admiration of the Ferrarese, strewed cinders on her head, as was the duty of every honest sinner, and did not fail to show herself to the eyes of the citizens dressed in penitent's garb and mingling with the throng who hung on the preacher's words and interrupted his discourse with loud applause.

To this preacher, Bernardo Ochino, Tullia thought fit to address a sonnet, reproaching him for trying to deprive people of their "free will" and forbidding

them to indulge in personal adornments, dancing, and playing, which amusements, she declared, were gifts from God to man in the earliest ages. The courtesan, who did not hesitate to accuse the pious Lenten preacher of arrogance, must have set great store by this exercise of "free will" for the purpose of winning the admiration of the subjects of Ercole II and his Duchess, highly praised by the divine muse of Ariosto; for it was precisely by these very arts that she won the favour of all who came into contact with her.

A letter written on June 13, 1537, from Ferrara to Isabella d'Este throws a curious light on Tullia's stay in Ferrara and an adventure which befell her there. "There is come to this city," says the writer, "a fair courtesan from Rome named Signora Tullia, who intends to stay here some months, from what I hear. She is very charming, discreet and clever, and gifted with the most perfect manners; she can sing anything at sight, and is without a rival in conversation; and so agreeably does she bear herself that there is neither man nor woman who can equal her, although the most illustrous lady, the Marchioness of Pescara, is most excellent, and she is here, as your Excellency knows. This Tullia shows a knowledge of everything, and only speaks with you of what is interesting to you. Her house is always full of *virtuosi*, and it is at all times possible to see her; she is rich in money, jewels, chains, rings, and other valuable things; in short, she is well provided with everything."

It is plain that the "fair courtesan" was showing herself under her most discreet and virtuous aspect, making good use of her power of delighting and bewitching every one who spoke to her. The free display of wealth obtained none knew how, the living without any mystery under the eyes, as it were, of the whole city, the being always surrounded by *virtuosi* to whom she could show off her talents, and the receiving freely whoever desired to make her acquaintance, were but so many clever ruses to prove that she was a woman of irreproachable character.

It was of the greatest importance to Tullia to be thought well of, and to build up for herself a solid reputation against which all the attacks of calumny and scandal would be in vain. Rome was a long way off, and even if unfavourable rumours were to float as far as Ferrara, they would be contradicted by facts and opinions which could only redound to her credit. The wealth she displayed would prove that she was independent and in no need of interested homage. She posed as a literary woman with illustrious antecedents; she did not scorn the outward forms of religion, and wanted to be in a position, like Vittoria Colonna, to offer advice to Ochino. For one who had been exposed to the biting witticisms of Pasquino and the fiery attacks of Roman satire, it must have been a great and indescribable satisfaction to feel herself regarded as the equal or even the superior of the Marchioness of Pescara, admired and courted of all, the object of the affections of poets

and gentlemen, with one or another ever prostrate at her feet!

It is probable that at this glorious period of her career Tullia hoped to raise herself above her actual position and prepare for herself a more exalted future; perhaps she thought that the adulatory verses and the general wave of poetical sentiment with which her admirers now almost overwhelmed her would serve to wash out the sordid prose of her earlier years. She delighted in practising a gentle modesty, in shy refusals, and in declaring herself pure and incorruptible to those who had easy means of learning the truth about her previous life. To prefer platonic friendships to the lovers sighing at her feet, to inspire songs and poems, to bring low the proudest heads and turn a deaf ear to the most ardent declarations, to play with love as a cat plays with a mouse when it knows it is certain of its prey, must have afforded Tullia a keen joy such as only goddesses can know. Who can read the heart of a woman when she is eaten up with pride and vanity? Who can divine the audacious plans of which the feminine mind is capable when it knows itself mistress of all the arts of grace and beauty? It would almost seem as though, now in the prime of life, she was trying the power of her charms to its full extent, seeing to what lengths she could drive those who were caught in her toils and blinded by her undeniable attractions.

In the above-mentioned letter to Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua, the writer describes an un-

fortunate adventure which befell a youth belonging to one of the best families of Ferrara (he does not give the name, "for the honour of his family"), who fell desperately in love with Tullia and attempted to bribe her with offers of "money and gold ornaments and pearls of great value." But the lady was obdurate, possibly that she might give the lie to the calumnies concerning her which Giovanni Battista Giraldi was just then disseminating verbally throughout Ferrara. But the youth's passion only increased with opposition and he determined to marry her as soon as she liked. The offer of marriage was no more successful than the gifts, however, and the disdainful lady told him that she had not come to Ferrara to settle, but was returning to Rome at the end of the season. She was enchanted to have an opportunity of showing the people and even the Court, that she had not been reduced to coming to Ferrara to take the first husband she could pick up, but that, on the contrary, she had only to raise her little finger and from all parts of Italy would come rushing adorers, old and young, gentlemen, poets, and knights, all famed for birth or strength or valour ; she wanted to make it plain that she scorned to change her laurel wreath for the house-wife's cap ; she had beauty and freedom, and had no intention as yet of imprisoning her still blooming youth within the sacred bonds of matrimony.

Although the young man still pursued her with vows and entreaties, she did not close her door to him ; a disconsolate suitor, a husband refused, was too

valuable a witness to her integrity to be summarily dismissed! He was planning to trap her, but though she suspected his intentions she took no means to foil his plans, trusting to come out of the adventure with as much honour to herself as there would be scandal for the opposite party.

So she waited. At last the amorous youth pretended that his sister and another kinswoman, both married, and to nobles who were related to each other, had heard of the delights of her society, and in order to make her acquaintance would do her the favour of coming to supper with her. Tullia declared herself ready to receive the ladies, so the youth provided all that was needful for a fine supper and sent everything to Tullia's house, together with a good cook to prepare the entertainment. The two ladies, however, failed to appear at the appointed time. Instead, late in the evening, the youth presented himself at the house, accompanied by a friend, and with pretended indignation and despair informed Tullia that the ladies' husbands had refused to allow them to come. Whether Tullia believed him or not, they sat down to the long-delayed supper, and afterwards spent the time in pleasant conversation, until, at two in the morning, the lady bade the two youths depart to their own lodgings. Then the lover with a dramatic gesture drew forth a string of pearls worth a hundred scudi or more, and placing it in Tullia's hand begged her to grant him hospitality for that night, as he was afraid of being attacked and perhaps

killed by his enemies if he walked through the streets at that late hour. Moreover, he declared he was ready to marry her on the spot if she would but consent, and drawing out of the breast of his tunic two valuable rings, he bade her call in any one she liked as witness and he would espouse her instantly. At a word from the lover his companion disappeared, and then, with no third person present, the scene began to grow dangerous. But Tullia rose with all the dignity of an outraged queen, and taking up the jewels, she gave them back to the youth (who knows how unwillingly !) repeating in no unmistakeable terms her refusal either to accept his gifts or become his wife. The desperate youth stood there as though turned to stone; he remembered the soft glances, the whispers, the sighs of other days, and scarcely believed the cruel words he had just heard. Then, suddenly coming to himself, he broke out in curses against his evil fate, and violently tearing open his tunic, he seized the dagger he wore at his side and plunged it into his own breast.

The comedy was now changed into a drama. Fortunately, however, the deity who watches over fools and the imprudent took care that the dagger should glance sideways and cause a wound that was comparatively slight. But it was high time to call for assistance, in order that this new Lucrece might not be threatened like the Roman wife. The women of the house rushed in, together with a man who chanced to be there, it was said, but who had in all

probability been retained in case of need. They lifted up the wounded youth and wanted to carry him off to the nearest physician, but he resisted, and cried out that he would be married at all costs. So then Tullia said to him in the presence of all there:

"Assuredly ye are a most discourteous gentleman! Be now warned, lest your obstinacy and frivolity bring you to further hurt and shame. If ye do not depart and if ye persist in staying in my house against my wish, I swear by my faith that to-morrow morning as soon as it is light I will go to his Excellency the Duke and complain of your presumptuous insolence, and I do not think that his Lordship will allow me to be thus troubled by a person to whom I have never given offence."

The courtesan exhibited all the pride and dignity of the royal house to which she claimed to belong; but neither advice nor threats had the slightest effect on the obstinate youth. So they locked him in the room where this exciting drama had taken place, and the outraged lady sent immediately for a friend, a certain "valiant soldier," who quickly appeared with two companions (all three engaged beforehand, also!), and they sat with her until daylight.

As soon as it was day the room was opened by the soldier's advice and the youth was found stretched on the bed, half dead from loss of blood. He was removed to his own house and put to bed there, and only narrowly escaped paying for his folly with his life. Through this adventure he lost all favour in his lady's

eyes, but Tullia's virtue was triumphantly proved to be an impregnable fortress, the spirited defence of which had earned for her the sympathy of the most strict and select persons in the city. The Muse was not to be tempted by gold and pearls and offers of marriage; the courtesan could be offended in her womanly dignity as well as any other of her sex, and the rumours current concerning her avarice and her vice were only so many calumnies set on foot by malicious enemies or other rejected suitors.

So Tullia triumphed, and henceforth the united verdict of all Ferrara proclaimed her superior even to Vittoria Colonna herself! Her honour was vindicated, and with a high head and royal mien, Tullia of Arragon, poet and courtesan, held court in Ferrara in peace.

## IV

TULLIA OF ARRAGON had now succeeded in winning for herself a firm and respectable position in Ferrara, and in climbing on to a pedestal worthy of her glory. The only thing she now lacked was a trumpeter who would sound her praises in resonant notes, a poet who would immortalise her charms in sugared and flowery verse. This poet was presently found in Girolamo Muzio, and it is from his rhymed descriptions of her adventures, wherein he alludes to her under the names of *Tyrrhenia* or *Thalia*, that we obtain the most precise information concerning her life in Ferrara.

We must first, however, give some account of this Muzio, who played such an important part in Tullia's existence and whose name is linked with hers both in poetical and in actual adventures.

Girolamo Muzio, who afterwards called himself Justinopolitano, after the Latin name of his father's birthplace, Capodistria, was born on March 12, 1496, in Padua, where his father held an appointment as master in a public school. The real name of the family was Nuzio, but he had changed it to Muzio on pretence of being descended from the ancient Muzî,

famous both in arms and letters, who with other Roman families had revived learning in that city in the time of the Emperor Justino. Of his early life little is known, save that it was passed at Capodistria, whither his father had returned in the exercise of his profession; but at seventeen years old Muzio left his home and commenced a roving life as scribe and poet in the service of bishops or princes, poets, ambassadors, or men of the sword. After his father's death he returned to Capodistria, where he spent some considerable time, occupying himself, together with other youths, such as the Vergerio, Vida, and Grisoni, in riding and other knightly exercises and in literary labours. After this, however, he knew no rest, and his life was a wandering one. He became secretary to the bishop Pietro Bonomo from Trieste, beloved of the Emperors Frederick III. and Maximilian I., and in his train Muzio visited Styria, Carinthia, Austria, Bohemia, and the Tyrol, travelling also in Germany; and when Bonomo returned home Muzio betook himself to Venice, where he resumed his studies, first under Raffaelo Regio and then under Giovan Battista Egnazio. In spite of his work in the wealthy library and in the company of his learned master, it was impossible for him to escape the attractions of love, to which amusement he soon devoted himself with youthful ardour. A Venetian lady was the object of his first passion, and his feelings found expression in verse. During the period between Christmas and Carnival the open squares in front of the Venetian

churches were the scenes of continual merrymakings, and after his day's work amongst books and manuscripts, Muzio used to issue forth at night with the masked singers and musicians who serenaded the ladies waiting at their windows, and went to see his beloved. But death put an end to this idyll, and the poet's grief was increased by the fact that all his compositions sacred to the lady were stolen from him, whereby he seemed to lose her a second time.

He soon recovered from the blow, however, for we next find him in Piedmont, in the service of Giovanni Bartolommeo Tizzoni, Count of Desana, celebrating the Carnival of 1525 at the Castle of Valperga with dances, feastings, and new love affairs. A letter written to the Countess Margherita Tizzoni, the wife of his patron, gives us a lively picture of the Piedmontese manners and customs of the sixteenth century. On Muzio's arrival at Valperga he found there a number of gentlemen who, hearing that he came from Venice, where it was supposed that men were not accustomed to have any intercourse with women, endeavoured to turn him into ridicule. But Muzio was too knowing to fall into the trap. Let him tell the story in his own words :—

"On the morning of the day when the festival was to begin several persons asked me whether I were going to attend the entertainment. I replied, 'How! I intend to be the foremost there!' When I arrived I sat me down upon a bench not far from Monsignor di Masino (the lord of Valperga), who was sitting in

the midst of the women, and who, placing a young woman in my arms, said to me, 'Take thou hold of this one.' Immediately throwing one arm round her neck and with the other hand taking one of hers, I began to talk with her. The eyes of all were upon me, and I, feigning not to be aware of it, continued my diversion. Then Monsignor di Masino, who had another damsel upon his knee, called me by name and kissed his companion, and I did likewise, kissing mine. But now came my lady's father and brothers and asked me what I was doing, and I made answer that they were truly fortunate in possessing so wise and graceful a daughter and sister. Thus did I spend that evening with more astonishment to others than ridicule unto myself. Upon the following night there was performed that dance which is called the *brando*, wherein all the men dance with all the women in turn, and leaving hold of their own partner they do kiss the one whom they next take hold of, and thus they go on until they find their partner again, and when they take her again they kiss her also. Now when I took my partner again and made as though to kiss her, she thrust her chin down into her bosom and feigned to be shy ; but as I well understood that it was all done in order to make trial of me, I placed one hand at the back of her head and the other beneath her chin, and so by force I kissed her."

In this way the Piedmontese ladies were convinced that Muzio was no raw boy, and henceforth they took more delight in his society than in that of the other

gentlemen. Muzio was asked if the Piedmontese would be allowed to kiss the women of his country as he had been allowed to kiss theirs, and he replied that if the Piedmontese were to go to his country they would have to adapt themselves to the customs there as he had adapted himself to the manners here. And on being further asked which customs pleased him most, he answered that he preferred the Piedmontese, but in the houses of other people!

In spite of all these attractions, Muzio did not remain many years in Piedmont with Count Tizzoni, who sent him on an embassy to the Duke of Urbino and afterwards to General Lautrec. After leaving Tizzoni he went to France with Count Claude Rangone, and saw the arrival of Eleanor, sister of Charles V. and bride of Francis I., the restitution of the king's children, and the consignment of thirty loads of gold which were sent into Spain. At the courts both of Paris and Amboise, Muzio was treated with much honour by the king, and no less so by the various literary men gathered there, amongst whom one of the foremost was the Florentine poet, Luigi Alamanni. After his return to Italy Muzio lived quietly for some time at Concordia in the pay of Count Galeotto Pico della Mirandola, who gave him a hundred scudi a year. In June, 1533, his patron sent him to Rome to take up, before Pope Clement VII., the defence of Mirandola's property, the possession of which was disputed by a relative of the Count. In Rome, however, he made but a short stay, for he was disappointed at not finding

any of his old Istrian friends there, and moreover he considered that Count della Mirandola failed to accord him the esteem and position due to him. So he left his service, and soon afterwards had the good fortune to be called to the Court of Ferrara into the service of Duke Ercole II. Here in Ferrara, a few years later, Muzio met Tullia of Arragon.

Sought after at Court, highly esteemed by gentlemen and scholars of all descriptions, Muzio was the very type of the poet Tullia was in search of, and the clever woman immediately perceived that, by keeping a wary check upon him and restraining his ardour when it threatened to grow inconvenient, she might safely bestow her favours on him and turn his talents and his popularity to good account for herself.

The fiery and susceptible Muzio very soon fell desperately in love with her ; he was enthralled by her charms and dazzled by the beauty of her bright eyes, which he described as—

> ". . . beauteous eyes,
> Gracious eyes, amorous eyes and dear,
> More lovely than the stars or than the sun
> And unto me . . .
> Dearer than life itself or mine own soul."

Tullia became his muse, and since he could not bring it about that her soul should be "indissolubly united" with his, he desired that at least their two names should be "read together eternally," and that they should thus "live together bright and immortal." The ardent lover endeavoured to prove that his affection could

never be diminished either by distance or any of the vicissitudes or changes to which woman is subject, and under the name of *Tyrrhenia* he idolises her even from the very first of the *Amorous Eclogues* in which *Mopso* laments the cruelty of the nymph he adores. The reality of passion is scarcely hidden in these Arcadian pastorals ; from behind the rustic mask of *Mopso* are heard the burning words of the cavalier and courtier of Ercole II., Duke of Ferrara, who was caught in the toils of this clever woman somewhere about 1537. And he confesses it, too, writing thus of himself :

> "The inward splendour and the brilliant face
> Of fair Tyrrhenia so oppress his breast,
> Such great joy hath he of her that his tongue
> Hath neither will nor power to speak of aught
> Save her alone."

One hears at once that he has been taken captive. At forty years old love is no longer a mere flame ; it is a mighty fire, and the greater it is the more suddenly does it break out. Muzio makes *Mopso* tell the story of this love, and the pastoral verses vibrate with passionate memories, showing a truth of expression and an artistic power which a poet of this standing would hardly have been expected to possess.

It is spring-time, that unreliable season which quickens the blood even of forty-year-old poets—

> "It was the season when the meadows green
> Are full of blossom, when the roses bloom,
> And birds are singing midst the flowers new."

The picture evoked by these words is charming; it breathes a fragrance suggesting moments of sweet abandon, when the heart softens at the sight of such beauty. The smiling picture of the season of roses, sketched with but few strokes, contrasts vividly with the verses which follow wherein sudden, overwhelming, fatal love is described with a vigour of expression singular in a writer of that century:

> "When first I saw thee, at that earliest glimpse
> My heart was rapt, and through my being sped,
> Moved by the power of thy lovely eyes,
> Ice-cold fear mingled with hot desire."

But *Tyrrhenia* seemed inaccessible then—

> "More scorning love and fleeing faster still
> Than timid doe before the hunter flees."

She has a heart of ice and is deaf to all *Mopso's* prayers and vows; in her beauty and cruelty are combined, and not all the praises addressed to her shapely limbs or the burning words of her adorer can move her from her proud reserve. Apparently the poet asks too much, at least for a beginning, and Tullia does not seem to have made any immediate response to the amorous invitation at the end of the poem, where *Mopso's* verses are inflamed by the reality of the desire consuming the courtier. In our eyes the Nymph is transformed into the woman who understands how to awaken the most ardent longings and to extinguish

them or hold them in check until a more convenient time or place.

It is easy to see that Tullia must have been a woman of entrancing beauty; that Bonvicino's portrait is a faithful one, and that the verses she inspired were not mere hollow-sounding words of cold adulation, not only a tribute to the poetess, the writer, the Muse, but the expression of genuine feelings excited by the light of those beautiful eyes and the grace of those shapely limbs. Verses which, in spite of the modern taste for realism, no woman would care to have addressed to her nowadays, could then be read openly at the Court of the Duke of Ferrara, together with other effusions celebrating the glories of illustrious and noble ladies and the valour of princes and gentlemen.

Muzio had written thirty-five eclogues, divided into five books, which first saw the light in 1550, printed by Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari and Brothers, and dedicated to Signor Antonio d'Oria. The first eclogues, wrote the poet, "treat of my loves, and are entitled the *Amorose;* the second book describes the honours and loves of the late Marquis del Vasto and the lady Donna Maria of Arragon, his wife, the which I have called the *Marchesane.* In the third, I have celebrated various illustrious persons, wherefore I have called it the *Illustri.* In the fourth, I do bewail the deaths of persons whose servant I was or to whom I was united in the bonds of friendship, and I call it the *Lugubri;* and because of the variety of the subjects treated of in the fifth book it has been fitly named

*Varie.* The *Amorose*, therefore, represent the fragrant myrtle, the *Marchesane* the noble laurel, the *Illustri* the lofty cedar, the *Lugubri* the mournful cypress, and the *Varie* represent divers kinds of trees."

Neither the Marchioness del Vasto, the Duke and Duchess of Mantua, Signor Luigi Gonzaga, the Duchess of Savoy, Hercules d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, Cardinal Ippolito, the Duchess of Lorraine, Galeotto Pico della Mirandola, the Lady Margherita Tizia, Countess of Desana, nor the Most Christian King Francis scorned to have their names coupled with that of Tullia, nor did Donna Maria of Arragon take offence because the name of Arragon was borne by one whose too freely exhibited charms were extolled in these same poems. It is not surprising, therefore, that *Mopso's* verses were pleasing to Tullia, who desired to go down to posterity surrounded by that halo of glory which she knew so well how to extract from poets, and that she showed her gratitude to Muzio is to be inferred from one of his letters to Antonio Mezzabarba :

"For some time," he says, "I had celebrated the Signora Tullia under the name of *Tyrrhenia*, when, as we were talking together one day of these matters, in which she has always taken and still continues to take such great delight, we began to speak of the Muses and of their names and virtues. After we had reasoned upon this subject for some time, she fell into a silence as though a new thought had come to her ; then after a while she began to speak

again and said to me: 'For several days now I have cherished an idea in my mind, and now that we are upon the subject I will impart it to you. You have long sung of me under the name of *Tyrrhenia*, but now I desire that you should change my name and call me *Thalia*. But you must do it in such a way that all will understand that *Tyrrhenia* and *Thalia* are one and the same person. Now bethink yourself of the way.' I replied that I would obey her wish. I will relate everything to you exactly. We were then in Ferrara, and between the house where she lodged and mine, perchance about half-way, there was a large retired space whither I used to withdraw me to walk and meditate. And I did not leave this place before I had devised a way of carrying out my intention and beginning the composition. And I became so excited over my subject that when I returned to her at the usual hour upon the following day, the thing was already accomplished. She can bear witness to this and remembers it and has related it unto divers persons. And I tell you, upon my faith, that of that first draft of the composition which I took her on that occasion I do not think I altered fifteen verses and there are near two hundred of them. Mine invention was that *Mopso* finds himself one night transported to Helicon, where he perceives that she whom he had loved in the form of a nymph is really *Thalia*. Here he is crowned by *Erato* and given to drink of the water of Hippocrene. Then, in imitation of Horace, I imagine that he is turned into a swan and

ascends to the circles of the moon. This I did because *Thalia* is supposed to represent the harmony of that sphere, and because when in the following eclogue I assign to each Muse her own particular heaven, this sphere is made special to *Thalia*. And the description of flower and leaf did I write because the name *Thalia* (as you know) comes from a Greek word which signifies growing green, or sprouting, for she gives new life to the thoughts of those on whom she sheds her favours. And as I had filled *Mopso* with that kind of madness I gave the name to the poem, with which I was all the more pleased as I had therein described the madness which I myself felt—

"'Mopso's madness was likewise mine own.'

This, then, was the reason wherefore I wrote that poem, such was my subject and such mine intention."

This long letter, proof of the amorous relations existing between Muzio and Tullia when in Ferrara, shows that whether as *Tyrrhenia* or *Thalia* she still desired to hold the key of the poet's heart. Their respective houses were near each other; *tête-à-tête* interviews were frequent and tender, inspired by love of the Muses (perchance also by a more earthly love), and occupied with the studies in which the lady delighted and which we trust were confined to the subject of poetry. Between her and Muzio existed the greatest intimacy; she addressed him with the familiar "thou," and he was ready to obey her slightest behest. Apparently she could not persist in

denying her poet what he so poetically prayed for, and in the fourth eclogue, entitled *Thalia*, we find her less obdurate, less cold, and less proud. Perhaps her feelings as a mere woman seemed less mundane and more ethereal when disguised as the adventures of a Muse! However it may have been, *Mopso's* outpourings now betray the fact that she has made him happy, and although in this fourth poem he refuses to give any details concerning the "great good fortune" which has befallen him, for fear of arousing the envy of less fortunate men, his lamentations cease and a beatific content is the prevailing note of his effusions.

It was a fact, Tullia responded to Muzio's love; all those poetical metamorphoses of *Tyrrhenia* into *Thalia* are in the eyes of the curious and incredulous only so many proofs of it. Women, even the most experienced in love affairs, are sometimes seized with scruples and prejudices enough to send the most platonic admirer mad with impatience. That a Muse should yield to a Poet and thus enable him to sing of his good fortune may be perfectly correct according to the code of morals of Parnassus and Helicon, but it would have been highly improper for *Tyrrhenia* to fall into the arms of *Mopso*. The loves of nymphs and shepherds bore too close a resemblance to those of satyrs with dryads and hamadryads, they were altogether too much of the earth earthy; far better to remain in mid-air surrounded by a halo of poetry.

Thus the first book of the *Amorous Eclogues*, which opens with such a vivid and realistic picture of *Mopso's*

affections, gradually loses its human interest; *Tyrrhenia* is transformed into *Thalia* when she has come to terms with the poet whose despairing verses threatened to compromise her.

This poetic, if platonic, love affair was suddenly interrupted, however, by an order from Duke Hercules of Ferrara, sending Muzio to Milan on political business. The luckless official tried to evade the order and induce his master to send another in his place, even attempting to move him by addressing to him certain verses in which the Duke, Muzio, and Tullia were represented as a ploughman, a shepherd, and a nymph, and the former was implored not to be so cruel as to separate the other two. But although the Duke was a poet himself, he had sufficient common sense not to sacrifice politics to poetry, and he remained obdurate. Moreover he was probably not particularly pleased at hearing himself described as a ploughman, and had no mind to pose as an intermediary in the love affair between *Mopso* and *Thalia* by revoking the order given. So towards the end of June, 1537, Muzio departed, cursing politics, tyrants, and all the heartless ways of those in power. He went first to Piacenza, thence to Reggio Emilia, and Forlì, reaching Milan only towards the middle of December.

His stay in Milan was not a short one, and was, moreover, embittered by not receiving either messages or letters from Tullia. He began to suffer the torments of jealousy and the obstinate silence of his beloved fostered suspicion in his mind. Why did

she never answer his letters? A certain little devil whispered in his ear that perchance *Thalia* had listened to the flatteries of other adorers, and his misery increased. He tried to console himself by thinking of her and composing poems to her. Apparently she lived in some place on the banks of the river Po, for the poet envies the river its opportunity of continually admiring the fair lady who was as a flower upon its bank and a light upon its waves. Like all lovers, he was always longing for the presence of the woman he looked upon as a heavenly creature:

> "Go, spread your wings, ye mournful sighs of mine,
> And carry thither, where the winds do blow,
> Mine ardent longing unto her I love."

He gave vent to his complaints in numerous sonnets, many of which are obvious imitations from Petrarch, but which contain, nevertheless, some note of true passion, some new and original idea. Muzio's talent was not at its best in sonnets, however; the artificial language of love, which possessed a set phraseology and a whole gallery of ready-made imagery, copied from the eternal models of Messer Francesco Petrarca, rarely gave the poet a chance of directly describing his own feelings and sorrows. In these productions it is impossible to decide whether the sonnet has been inspired by the love, or whether the love is the effect of the sonnet; of the special circumstances of each particular rhymer nothing is known, everything is merged in one indefinite harmony which often pleases

the ear but leaves the heart cold. If we possessed no records of the Italian life of those days beyond these rhymes and songs, we should be forced to believe that the most spiritual platonism reigned alike in the courts of princes and in literary and civil society. The women were all muses or goddesses, the men all shepherds! Truly, we should be inclined to pity those poor knights and unfortunate poets who were obliged to live in a perpetual atmosphere of sighings and oglings, wherein they must have been even more dreadfully bored than we are to-day when we read their verses.

But although the poets did not alter the style of their productions, they were by no means averse in the long run to changing the subject and seeking fresh muses. Even Muzio presently grew tired of sighing for the distant Tullia—

> "Being warmed no longer by the lovèd rays,
> The burning ardour ceased, I know not when,
> Like fire over which the ash is spread."

We are not told who the nearer muse was; we only know that, entering the service of Alfonso Davalo some time afterwards, he could not resist the charms of his "golden Clori," as he called a certain Madonna Chiara, with whom he fell in love and whose subsequent death he bewailed in sonnets and elegies. *Mopso* had become changed into *Egone*, who, perhaps grown more cunning in love matters, had obtained from *Clori* two living proofs of her affection, on whom he bestowed the names of Giulio Cesare and Paolo Emilio.

The fair Tullia does not seem to have been at all distressed by Muzio's infidelity, not even when, a few years later, he met her again in Florence and once more became one of her most favoured admirers. She had no lack of lovers. The chorus of praises was not silenced by the departure of Muzio, and Tullia turned amorous eyes upon other poets of the Ferrarese Court. Ercole Bentivoglio alludes openly to this fact in a sonnet addressed to her, which begins—

"Leaving the seven hills, the waters dark
Of ancient Tiber and the smiling land,
Thou camest, Tullia, to set thy fair foot
On banks of Po and brighten all his shore.

All evil thoughts in us extinguished were,
And tender fires and heavenly longings then
Were born within our souls upon that day
When thine eyes first upon us turned their gaze."

She did not disdain the homage of an admirer who was younger than Muzio, and the tall poplars growing along the banks of the Po were probably discreet witnesses of new love-scenes and heard the new lover sing of his good fortune in sweetest verse. *Hercules* had been vanquished by *Omphale*, and, thanks to the disguise of a convenient mythology, he was able to relate in flowing hendecasyllables his triumphs over this new marvel of beauty and coquetry.

The poplar trunks beside the Po must have been all cut over with the name of Tullia, so many were the lovers she had won and bound captive to her

chariot wheels. She was a constitutional queen, and did not forbid the elect to enter that Parliament where there was ample room for all ; and Tullia's Parliament was a sort of academy whose members were all under an obligation to sing her praises. Nowadays, when views on love and women have changed, such an academy would be regarded with suspicion, and it would be incomprehensible why so many desired to be enrolled and how she could be the first to boast of it.

In his dialogue called *Della Infinità d'Amore*, in which the three characters represented are Tullia, Benedetto Varchi and Lattanzio Benucci (two Florentine lovers who did not come on the scene until much later), Benucci says that "she may esteem herself the happiest of women, for there are, or have been, very few amongst those famed in our day as excelling in arms, letters, or any other profession, who have not loved and honoured her. And I named unto her many gentlemen, men of letters of all kinds, lords, princes, and cardinals, who at all times had resorted unto her house as unto a universal and honourable academy and who, both in the past and present, bestowed homage and fame upon her, because of the rare and singular gifts of her most noble and courteous mind. I had already named an infinite number and was about to continue, almost in despite of her, for she called out and sought to interrupt me." And probably the list was longer than Tullia found exactly convenient ! In the seventh Eclogue, entitled *Tyrrhenia*, written many years after his first meeting

with her, Muzio pretends that *Tirsi* asks *Dameta* for the names of the shepherds who have "sung and burned for her." And *Dameta* replies that it is quite impossible for her to remember them all! Then comes a list of lovers, of whom the principal are only indicated under feigned names. There were eleven of these, amongst whom, notwithstanding the disguise of words, we recognise Varchi, Bernardo Tasso, Ercole Bentivoglio, Ludovico Martelli, Muzio, Latino Giovenale, Giulio Camillo Delminio, and perhaps Claudio Tolomei. But whoever will take the trouble to read the *Rime della Signora Tullia e di Diversi a Lei*, published by Giolitó in Venice in 1547, may easily add the following names to the list: Bembo, Ridolfo Baglioni, Francesco Crasso, Molza, Colonel Luca Antonio (otherwise Cuppano of Montefalco), Ugolino Martelli, Bernardo Ochino, Emilio Tondi, Tiberio Nari, Piero Mannelli, Simone Porzio, Lattanzio Benucci, Alessandro Arrighi, Niccolò Martelli, Lasca, Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, Filippo Strozzi, Benedetto Arrighi, Simone dalla Volta, and Camillo da Montevarchi. We know also that amongst her friends she reckoned Giovambattista Savello, Giordano Orsino, Sperone Speroni, Fracastoro, and the severe Jacopo Nardi.

How this by no means ordinary company of gentlemen and writers could continue to regard her with approving eyes as she dispensed her favours to all and sundry is a mystery to us, and must certainly have seemed extraordinary to their contemporaries.

Even Muzio, obstinate and impenitent as he was in singing her praises, thought this singular fact demanded some explanation, and in his *Tyrrhenia* he makes *Tirsi* inquire of *Dameta* how it is that her illustrious lovers are not jealous of each other. *Dameta* explains a somewhat subtle theory to show that the love for Tullia experienced by so many being a divine sentiment, there was no place in it for jealousy. The theory would be all very well if Tullia of Arragon had been either Vittoria Colonna, Veronica Gambara, or Irene of Spilimbergo! But the cunning *Dameta*, relying on *Tirsi's* credulity, does not risk raising this objection, and continues calmly to explain how divine love like this differs from the feelings aroused by a mere mortal. So far, it being question of a general theory only, *Tirsi* accepts the other's arguments, but when *Dameta* grows bolder and adds as an instance of her words—

> "Tyrrhenia's flame divine sheds clearest light
> On what I do explain and tell thee here,"

the assertion is a trifle too strong even for the credulous shepherd, although at the time when this *Eclogue* was written Tullia was making honourable amends for her past life, to which, as Muzio says, she had been driven by necessity; and probably, also, her beauty had begun to fade. *Dameta's* honeyed words were a pill too large for *Tirsi* to swallow at once, for he makes an ironical inquiry which *Dameta* pretends not to hear.

This production was dedicated to Tullia, probably in 1548, when the poet came to Florence to join the republic of love over which she presided. The faithful Muzio declares that in his composition there "is more affection than artifice," and that he has herein endeavoured to give a more detailed description of her than any one had yet produced. "And albeit my hand is not skilful enough to make a true portrait of you, I think I have at least drawn such a shadow of you that, just as the shadows of great beauties lead our souls gradually to desire true beauty, so by means of this shadow of you which I have made, noble spirits may rise to the contemplation of that true beauty which is in you. Wherefore, such as it is, I send it to you. And I will say no more, saving that if with your bodily eyes you could see another figure which hath long dwelt within my soul, and could compare it with yourself, you would not be able to discern whether your own image or that in my mind was nearest unto that form conceived *ab eterno* in the mind of God, in the likeness of which Nature did create you when she determined to 'show here below of what she was capable there above.'"

With these disgraceful praises of interested flatterers respect for truth compels us to compare other and very different opinions concerning Tullia's virtues, expressed in other places by these same admirers, by the lady herself, and by observers who were not blinded by her attractions. Muzio himself, who had idolised her in his poems when she was young and

lovely, wrote in his *Trattato di Matrimonio*, printed amongst his *Operette Morali* in 1550, that "necessity had been the cause of her past life," and with regard to her "free will," he said that "chance had misled it, but that now it was governed by her virtue." And Tullia herself, in the preface to the *Guerrin Meschino*, published in 1560, four years after her death, did not blush to declare that "it was no new thing that because of necessity or other misfortune a woman should happen to fall into bodily errors, and no less unto herself than unto others doth it appear unseemly that she should be dishonest and corrupt in her speech and other things." And she thanked God "for His great mercy in having, whilst I was not yet very old, but still young and fresh, enlightened me so that mine heart turned unto Him, and I desired so to act that others, both men and women, should do likewise."

Tullia had now reached the age of repentance, and confessed her sins and shortcomings. She renounced the sad life she had hitherto led "of necessity"; she reviewed her past, but in her repentance she could not resist a posthumous word of praise for that fatal beauty which had led her into so many errors. She was sincerely contrite, but she had not entirely overcome either her ambitions as a beautiful woman or her love of flattery. She wanted it to be clearly understood that she gave herself to God of her own free will and not because the devil was tired of her! No, her repentance was doubly meritorious, seeing that her still youthful charms would permit of further adven-

tures. She knew herself to be beautiful and she offered all her attractions and physical graces as a sacrifice to the Lord. Her repentance, therefore, was all the more sincere because she found it very hard to renounce the world and all its delights.

But were those praises which accompanied her throughout her long career all lies? Were they all deceivers, those lovers who were now shedding crocodile's tears over her past life?

There is a reverse to every medal. We have seen Tullia of Arragon wearing the poet's crown of laurel, let us glance at her now as she appears beneath the yellow veil of the courtesan.

## V

IN one of those dialogues by Sperone Speroni, in which every one longed and prayed to have a place, we meet Tullia of Arragon again, as a sort of second *Diotima*, discoursing of love with Bernardo Tasso in the presence of Niccolò Grazia and Francesco Maria Molza.

The fair enchantress had forgotten Muzio and Bentivoglio for Bernardo Tasso, just as she had forsaken the banks of the Po for the wider attractions of the Lagoons. The scene of this dialogue, appropriately called *d'Amore*, is laid in Venice about the year 1537, at the time when Bernardo was preparing to take his departure and "go to inhabit Salerno," and the subject of the discussion is provided by certain questions on love which have arisen between Tasso and "his Lady." In this dialogue, which Pietro Aretino compared to the Pantheon in Rome because of the perfection of its construction, the characters taking part in it talk of their affairs with a frankness and freedom which seems very strange to us nowadays. In treating of this subject Speroni had wisely not

represented himself as being one of the characters joining in the discussion, as Tullia did in the dialogue which she afterwards wrote in opposition to this. Thus he was able to call a spade a spade. The Paduan writer does not represent Tasso's beloved as being troubled with those platonic scruples which she used to parade when Muzio was her champion; she is apparently introduced for the purpose of discussing free love between free persons, and she casts off all useless pretences, declaring that, in order to be true and perfect, love must be fulfilled in all its conditions, material and spiritual.

As represented in prose (and prose written by those who knew her thoroughly), Tullia is no longer either *Tyrrhenia* or *Thalia;* she knows her position and accepts it, such as it is and such as men and hazard have made it, without any of that poetical hypocrisy which could only deceive a complacent and time-serving lover. Her own mistress, she held certain excessively liberal theories on love; she held that, in order to be perfect, love must be freed from all restraint, and she was jealous, because she feared that some other more adventurous woman might steal her lover from her as she herself had stolen him from a rival. She was afraid of losing Tasso's love, because she knew herself for what she was. "I know what I am," she said frankly, "and what I ought to be in order to be worthy of him; but I will either change my whole life and become the kind of woman I desire to be, or I will die in the attempt." For her

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

A COURTESAN, BY PARIS BORDONE.

[*To face page* 203.

consolation Grazia made the following somewhat too significant reply :—

"Take comfort, Signora Tullia, for I lately read a discourse by Broccardo spoken in honour of courtesans, in which he praised them in such a way that if Lucrece came to life again and heard it she would assuredly lead no other life than this. Having shown that the life of a courtesan is proper to women and that to live in any other way is going against nature, who created them for this end, he goes on to prove, amongst other things, that their manners and customs are a way and a means leading unto the knowledge of God. For, as the courtesan for various reasons loves many men—one because he is rich, another because he is handsome, another because he is virtuous—and to all in turn and in varying proportions distributes her favours, whilst she gives her heart to one only and for his sake reforms, so does God shed His grace in varying degrees upon mortal things, making them more or less perfect, according to their nature and office."

But Tullia objected to hear herself praised for being a woman of this kind, and answered :—

"I desire that you should put all poetry on one side, and should only consider the servitude, vileness, baseness and inconstancy of this life, cursing those who do uphold it, and making all excuses for those who fell into these errors when young and foolish, and who (if such there are) seek to escape from it, appealing to those who, by admonishing and assisting, are able to raise them up out of their misery. Broccardo

only chose to favour such a dishonest cause because of the love he bore unto some one, or else that he might better make exhibition of his wit."

As has been shown, Tullia was desirous of leading a better life, and thus making people forget her recent wanderings from the straight path. She aimed at what is now called "rehabilitation," showing herself to be an exception to the rule and widely different from her countless companions. The other personages of the dialogue, however, did not seem convinced, and the contrite air which she assumed in the presence of Bernardo Tasso, who probably knew how far to believe such sailor's oaths, might easily be looked upon as a fresh piece of acting. Grazia liked plain-speaking, and preferred an honest courtesan to a false penitent; wherefore he maintained that a courtesan need not necessarily be either vile or base, and turning to Tullia he said :—

"Such a one was Sappho, and such was she from whom Socrates, a most wise and excellent man, learned what manner of thing was love and gloried in the knowledge. Deign, therefore, to be the third in such a worthy company, and pray Love that out of these our discussions he will make a tale wherein your name shall find a place in no wise inferior to that held by *Diotima* in the dialogues of Plato."

The fact is plain ; whoever wrote the *Dialogo* was not afraid to call a spade a spade, and to tell Tullia to her face that she was one of those women "who make a profession of living by their beauty." Speroni,

speaking by the mouth of Grazia, adds moreover, that in her "Tasso found delight for all his senses." How different is all this, alas! from the delicate fancies of Muzio, the Arcadian hypocrisy of admiration, and the Platonism which produced the *Tyrrhenia!* Nor must it be supposed that Speroni was one of Tullia's detractors, or that, moved by jealousy or some other base reason, he deliberately sought to defame her character. "Poetry aside," as she herself says, worse things were said of her in prose. In his letter of June 6, 1537, in which he praises Speroni's *Dialogo d'Amore* up to the skies, Pietro Aretino writes that, "By this means Tullia has gained a treasure which will never grow less; and because of the honour here bestowed upon it, her wantonness may be justly envied even by the most modest and the most fortunate." Truly the Paduan writer had been too kind to her in naming her in such a work!

But this was not the worst. In his comedy *La Balia* (Florence, 1560), Girolamo Razzi gives her the title that properly belongs to her, but at least he recognises "her noble mind" and "high spirit." Pietro Aretino, however, who frequented the society of ladies of this class, gives an account of Tullia's humble origin in a certain work called the *Ragionamento del Zoppino*, wherein he treats of the life and genealogy of all the courtesans of Rome. After describing how many persons paid court to her for the sake of deriving reflected glory from her supposed noble origin, he says in conclusion: "Thus ye may see to what

families these creatures claim to belong, making themselves noble, and unto what low things they persuade greatness." Even worse things than these were written about her by Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cintio, who certainly knew her before she appeared in Ferrara, resplendent in youth and beauty ; for not only does he attribute to her a perverse nature and a character which exercised a baleful influence on all who were acquainted with her, but he even denies her the possession of physical beauty. His enmity has given rise to the suspicion that Giraldi had been an adorer who had adored in vain and that his words were prompted by jealous revenge ; but without wishing to slander Tullia in any way, I can hardly imagine that she would refuse any man's homage, however little acceptable she might find it, because therein precisely lay her art, the craftiness of the finished courtesan. It suffices, moreover, to note that Tale VII. of the introduction to the *Ecatommiti*, that in which Tullia appears, is one of the ten which prove "that, of all human loves, the only peaceful one is that existing between husband and wife, and that in unlawful love there is no repose" ; and one understands immediately that, in order to maintain his theory, Giraldi was obliged to come down heavily upon wanton women and their dishonest wiles.

There is no need to indulge in speculation in order to find an explanation of Giraldi's aversion to Tullia, for in the introduction to the *Ecatommiti* he declares his feelings openly. Women of evil life, he

says, are "wolves, whirlpools, and rapacious harpies"; they constitute "a sea of evil, the confusion of the world, a constant trouble, a perpetual war, a danger which increases from day to day, inevitable shipwreck, a mortal hindrance, a vessel of adultery, an inn of villainy, an insupportable burden, a murderous serpent, and, finally, they cause certain destruction of the possessions, lives and honour of men." According to him, "where there is no honesty there is no justice, and where there is no justice there is no goodness, and where there is no goodness there is no beauty. Therefore, as these women are dishonest they are not just, and not being just they are not good, and not being good they are not beautiful.

"So much wickedness is hidden beneath outward beauty, and certain talents, such as singing, playing, graceful dancing, and the gift of speaking softly and composing a few little things on love, which are as snares to catch the simple, only disguise a hideous and abominable soul; wherefore it may truly be said: 'How sad it is that such rooms should be inhabited by such evil mistresses.' . . . For they are like the sepulchres, which without are white, smooth, clean and polished, and often ornamented with gold, whilst within there is naught save horrors and putrefaction. Wherefore who observes them well will perceive that the semblance of true beauty which they display outwardly is nothing but a dangerous precipice, a pestilential poison. . . ." In short, according to Giraldi, their beauty is not beauty, but only "a shadow of it." It

is not surprising, therefore, that in the tale of *Saulo and Nana* he gives such an unpleasant picture of Tullia of Arragon.

"She says she is born of the House of Arragon," he writes, "although I understand that her mother was of the lowest and led that same manner of life as she herself; that she was born in some ditch, and that her mother could never say who was her father. Being arrived in our city (Rome), where now, by reason of the evil customs of our times, there are more like unto her than is seemly, she applied herself to earning money dishonestly, attracting youths by that outward semblance of virtue of which we have already spoken. And not only did she draw to herself inexperienced youths, but even mature and learned men, whom she led into all sorts of foolishness by her promises and then held up to ridicule, leaving her promises unfulfilled."

This portrait, however, can scarcely be a true one; surely the colouring is too exaggerated, the arts described are too vulgar to have been employed by a woman who was certainly not lacking in refinement! If her wiles and deceptions had been such as are here set forth, would not one victim speedily have warned and saved others? If Tullia had not been beautiful and easy to win, how could she have attracted such a host of admirers? For the sake of upholding his own theory Giraldi departs from the truth when he affirms that "her face was anything but pleasing"; he describes her as possessing a wide mouth with thin lips, a

long nose which was thick at the end and calculated to spoil any face, however lovely otherwise, but having quick, bright eyes which seemed to kindle a flame in every heart.

In his tale, moreover, he tells how *Saulo*, a "fair and courteous youth," fell in love with *Nana*, but in order to avoid describing her as beautiful, he says that she had blinded his eyes with her arts.

It might be better, however, not to pursue further the comparison between Tullia and *Nana* of the tale, for the latter, although in love with *Saulo*, sells herself to a vile German, and thereby so covers herself with disgrace in the eyes of all the Roman youth that she is forced to flee from the city.

If any one's eyes were blinded they were certainly those of Giovanni Battista Giraldi, who forgot alike the art of the novelist and the pitiful restraint of the gentleman. Even Pasquino did not wish her to die "in an hospital, stricken by divine justice and full of incurable ills." This was the moral ending the Ferrarese novelist gave to his story, a moral, if the truth must be said, scarcely in accrodance with Christian charity!

## VI

IT is uncertain precisely at what period Tullia of Arragon quitted Venice and took up her temporary abode in Siena, where, according to documents preserved in the archives of that city, she found it advisable to have a regular domestic establishment and a legal protector for her already fading beauty. Unknown, too, is the real reason which impelled her to settle in Siena, and there to accept that which she had refused in Ferrara, namely, a husband.

But Tullia was no longer young, and advancing years had, doubtless, taught her the wisdom of placing herself under the protection of the law, following the example of others of her class, in order to avoid the rigorous rules which had been drawn up for the conduct and control of courtesans. As Cesare Vecellio says, in his *Habiti Antichi e Moderni*, by giving the name of husband to some creature base enough to accept it, they were able to enjoy that luxury and that freedom in dress which the law otherwise forbade them. Tullia was now about thirty-seven years of age, and was nearing that fatal forty which is, or should be, the

signal for a woman to put away all thought of love or frivolity. On January 8, 1543, she was united in matrimony to Silvestro dei Guicciardi, a Ferrarese, who had probably accompanied her to Siena, and there taken upon himself the thankless and undesirable office of husband to the famous courtesan. The marriage took place on a Tuesday, with all the rites and forms prescribed by Church and law, and with exchange of rings, and the marriage certificate, signed by a certain Sigismondo Manni Ugolini, may be seen in the State Archives of Siena.

The marriage was useful, even if it was not happy, for only a few months afterwards Tullia was accused of having disobeyed the Siennese law by living outside the quarter to which courtesans were restricted, and wearing forbidden garments. Now she was able (on February 5, 1544) to present herself before the officers of the law and exhibit the certificate of her marriage with Guicciardi, by virtue of which she obtained from the magistrate (who was, it may be noted, provided with full and precise information concerning her life, habits, and character) a public decree declaring her in no way affected by the law relating to women of loose lives, and consequently free to live where she pleased and dress as behoved a lady of rank and irreproachable character. If her newly acquired legal position had not made her virtuous, it had at least placed her beyond the reach of the law and its penalties, and henceforth she was safe.

Considering the strict observance of the forms of

the statutes, as proved by the magistrate's action, it would be interesting to know the exact terms of the indictment drawn up in the Curia of the Captain of Justice and written out by Ser Lattanzio Lucarini, who, as a good lawyer, succeeded in proving the rectitude of Tullia's life and habits. But unfortunately the document has, so far, not been discovered amongst the Siennese archives, where in all probability the sagacious Lucarini took good care not to leave it! It appears, however, that the truthfulness of the magistrate's decree was not universally believed, for on the 23rd of August of this same year 1544, an anonymous accusation was placed in the receptacle for secret denunciations, to the effect that "on the Feast of the Holy Spirit, the Signora Tullia did unlawfully wear a *sbernia* (a sort of cap)." In spite of the magisterial decree, the people persisted in regarding Tullia as a woman of disreputable character, and in appealing against the permission granted her to dress as a noble lady and an honest person. But the Captain of Justice could only point to the verdict already pronounced, and pay no attention to the accusation. A husband may be of some use, after all!

Considerable doubt has been thrown on this marriage, although Muzio alluded to it in the treatise which he wrote on the subject of matrimony, and dedicated to Tullia, congratulating her on the new and safer position which put an end to her adventurous life, adding that he had been forced to leave her, both

for her honour and his own. The words he addresses to her are really noble, such as he might have written to any woman of spotless character. An unwavering admirer, Muzio maintained that Tullia had been virtuous in every act and deed; but that, nevertheless, when withdrawn into tedious solitude and without a "marital companion," even such a very virtuous life as Tullia's might have been "torn and bitten by the teeth of the malicious." His had been a virtuous love, and if men had only known the truth of the matter they would have judged him and his passion very differently. They would have recognised a new and rare example of "virtuous love," because virtue alone impelled him to love her, virtue kept him long captive to her "sweet companionship," and virtue caused him finally to withdraw. "Virtue, virtue, virtue!" cried Muzio in his loudest voice, but, nevertheless, the malicious continued to bite and mock, like Firenzuola, who wrote in his novel about the woman who sold the cask:

"Thou deservest to have a creature like Tullia, who did gain her living by adultery, and left her husband to die of hunger."

In order that he might not end in this miserable manner, the good Silvestro determined to leave his wife. There are no records to be found of Tullia's life with Guicciardi, but it was certainly of short duration, for he is not mentioned again by any chronicler; and soon afterwards she quitted Siena, free and without her "marital companion," to seek

a fresh scene for her performances, one which would be safer than this city, racked by civil strife, and where, moreover, all her sympathies lay with the vanquished party. It pleased Tullia, who had herself been vanquished in so many amorous contests, to take the weaker side; and in a sonnet addressed to Emilio Tondi on the death of his brother Ottaviano, who fell in the tumult of 1544, as also in another to Francesco Crasso "written in the name of the Siennese exiles," she frankly admits that her heart, or at least her protectors, belong to the fallen faction. Even when in 1546 she came to Florence, to take refuge beneath the wings of the "new Tuscan Numa," Duke Cosimo I., she did not attempt to conceal her affection for those who, like her, had deserted Siena. She declared that she had been drawn to "the happy banks of Arno from Arbia, whence all great souls have now fled," an expression probably suggested by the hatred which she bore against the instigators of the "Siennese revolt." She wrote another sonnet to the Duke, praying him to grant her peace and hospitality, and saying that the only thing she humbly desired was that her spirit might rest in his Court, safe from a threatened imminent death, and that her poor body might dwell within his wealthy gates. From this it would appear that she had been in actual peril of her life during the tumults in Siena, just as she ran the risk of losing her liberty through marriage.

Tullia probably arrived in Florence in the winter of 1545–46, because Niccolò Martelli, one of her

Florentine adorers, celebrated her coming in a sonnet which began—

> "What light is this, what beauty without end,
> Which makes our frozen shores to bloom and smile
> As doth the sun in midst of April's month?"

Tullia appears to have left Siena but scantily furnished with necessaries and in a miserable condition both of mind and body. But although she must by now have passed the fatal fortieth year, we gather from a letter written by Niccolò Martelli that she still resembled the portrait painted by Bonvicino. Praising her after the fashion of the sixteenth century, Martelli says that she was "so beautiful that her delicate face still retained that angelic look which it formerly possessed." And he goes on to describe her attractions detail by detail. "The whiteness of your flesh, which puts alabaster and purest snow to shame, has been kept fresh by your moderation and continence, not only in eating but in everything else, so that ye do still appear unto the eyes of others bearing all the gracious signs of love in your face."

Her mental qualities, however, surpassed her physical ones. Even the incredulous Florentines were filled with astonishment on hearing her "sing so sweetly and play upon any kind of instrument with her fair, white hand. Her conversation, too, accompanied by virtuous behaviour and courteous manners, caused men to sigh with chaste desires." And what shall be said of her eloquence, whether in private

or in public ? Martelli asserts that, even though there was once a Tullio of Arpino, the world can now justly boast of a Tullia of Arragon, and that, although she might not be superior to either Sappho or Corinne, her courtesy and lofty spirit surpassed anything of which their present age could boast.

Tullia's white hand already held the key to every heart in Florence, and the same honours were paid her on the banks of the Arno which had been accorded her in Ferrara and Venice. She was surrounded by a throng of aspirants and poets, held captive by her glances, smiles, and songs. But it was less a new lover that she was in search of now than a powerful protector in whom she could trust, and as she usually conferred her favours on the strongest of her admirers in order that she might pursue her own way under the shadow of his protection, she had no difficulty, amongst so many men of letters, in choosing one to whom she should award the palm. And the man whom Tullia selected as a lover suitable for her purpose, probably fixing her mind upon him even before she came to Florence, was Benedetto Varchi.

Only recently returned to Florence, recalled by Duke Alessandro that he might read before the Accademia degli Umidi, Benedetto Varchi was so famous for his literary works and his science that people ran out into the street to stare at him as he passed by. He was a genuine example of the typical scholar of the *Cinquecento*, always oscillating between vice and virtue, for which reason he was both ex-

travagantly praised and bitterly blamed. On this man Tullia had cast her eyes, and women of her stamp love with the head before they love with the senses, for the heart is scarcely concerned! *Nihil est in sensu quod non prius fuerit in intellectu, nisi ipse sensus.* If any capricious fancy takes them, they go on searching for their ideal man through an infinite series of experiments, until the final disappointment, more bitter than all the rest, impels them to seek in a mystical world the ideal they never succeeded in finding in the world of reality.

Tullia felt drawn toward Varchi as much by a certain resemblance in their circumstances and adventures as by his fame and her ambition. He, also, had been attacked by public opinion, and his name, like hers, had been on the lips of all, now accompanied by most extraordinary praise, now by infamous accusations. In the previous year, 1545, the more than forty-year-old poet had been dragged from his villa at Careggi (where he had hoped to spend the spring quietly, out of the reach of unjust and malicious tongues), and thrown into the secret prisons of the Bargello by order of the Council of Eight. He was accused of a shameful crime, and on March 26th was condemned to pay a heavy fine, but on giving security for the payment of the sum, he was immediately set at liberty. This affair filled the whole city with excitement; Varchi's enemies, both secret and acknowledged, rejoiced at his disgrace, whilst his friends talked to the Duke, wrote to Rome and everywhere

else in Italy and obtained letters from prelates and princes addressed to the Duke on Varchi's behalf. And the Duke, says Busini, was willing to pardon him if he would only confess to the crime, in order to "partially correct and cover the fault committed by those citizens who were of the Eight, in having so hastily imprisoned him without any cause whatsoever." Moreover "his allowance was increased to fifty-five ducats a month and he was commissioned to write the history of Florence from the year 1527, when, to regain its liberty, the whole city took up arms against the Medici."

After this unpleasant episode, Varchi seems to have retired into the country, and he was probably away from Florence at the time of Tullia's arrival. She greeted his return to the city with a poetical effusion wherein she frankly expressed her delight at the prospect of finding in him at once a protector and a lover, and that without any further danger to himself. During his absence she had constantly endeavoured to lure him to her side; she was afraid lest a country life and the pleasures of solitude should wean the poet's heart from more human affections, and she quickly made it clear to him, in flowing verse, how greatly she longed to be near him and to taste with him the sweetness of a rustic idyll, wherein she would play the nymph to his shepherd—*Phyllis* to his somewhat mature *Damon*. Varchi appears to have been unwilling for fresh adventures and not inclined to be tempted; but the lady had made up her mind to have

him for her own, and she returned to the assault with new verses, in which she praised his "immortal worth," asked why he resisted her and refused her invitations, begged him at least to write something in her honour, and assured him that she would spend the rest of her life in singing his praises, save that she feared to weary him. Tullia's pride was nettled ; that a mere scholar, a solemn prig of forty-three, should scorn the favours that young men of position had envied and prayed for !

At last Varchi gave way and made a suitable and poetical answer to her addresses. And, the ice being now broken, Messer Benedetto returned to Florence, and, having seen the lady, found himself quite unable to carry out his intention of keeping her at a frigid distance. He fell in love with her with all the ardour of a humanist suffering from an enforced abstinence from the gentler emotions ; but his conscience pricked him, nevertheless, and whilst pouring out his passion in verse he reproached himself for not being better able to restrain his feelings, lamenting that prudence had not come to him with his white hair. But reproaches and repentance were useless now. Tullia and Tullia alone filled all his thoughts ; *Phyllis* and *Damon* adored each other, and their verses were full of sighs, jealousy and reconciliation. Tullia sent her poetical efforts to her lover that he might correct and improve them ; she wanted him not only to love her, but also to sing her praises.

The correspondence, begun in rhyme, was continued in prose, and valuable proof of the friendship between

them is contained in Tullia's letters, preserved amongst many others addressed to Varchi in the Magliabechiana Library. But Tullia was more reserved in her prose writings and did not indulge in such expansive revelations of her feelings; she addresses him by the formal *you*, calls him her "dear master," and treats him with great respect. The earliest of these letters bears the date of January 28, 1546, and it is evident that a certain coolness had already sprung up between the two lovers.

"My dear Master,—Albeit it would seem that your lordship has entirely forgotten me, a thing hard for me to believe; I will not do the same unto you, indeed I neither can nor will. Rather will I continue to do as always, to remember, love, serve, and honour you with all my might. And in order that you may at least remember me when you do behold something of mine, I send you a sonnet, and I pray you, of the courtesy which you do always show me, that you will do me the favour of giving it that perfection which it lacks and sending it back to me as speedily as possible. And if I can be of service to you, command me, for I have no greater desire than to serve you. And holding myself ready to do your pleasure, with all my heart, I do commend myself unto you, together with Penelope and the others.

"Written the 28th day of January, 1546

"Your

"Tullia of Arragon."

The correspondence between the poet and his muse was certainly continued, probably with the same apparent reserve; but between January and August, 1546, no other letters have been found, except the following, which belongs to the end of the latter month and is much warmer in expression, although touched here and there with a tender melancholy. Tullia wrote from her country villa, situated apparently beside the little river Mensola, for a sonnet addressed to her by Lattanzio Benucci, another of her adorers, bears this title. From the banks of the "little river," whose stream was diminished by "the burning summer heat," the fair lady wrote thus to her Benedetto :—

"If I were not so accustomed to the buffetings of my evil and hostile fate, I make no doubt that I should pour out my complaints unto you with but little regard for the trouble which I should thereby cause you, seeing that you are as mine own soul, for perchance I should thereby lessen mine affliction. I came hither last Sunday; on Monday came Arrigo; on Tuesday came Doctor de' Benucci and is here still. To-day my mother has been seized with a violent fever, and I know not what it is; but for my misfortune I do always think the worst, so that I have no comfort at any time or place. I know that in this matter ye will understand a part of my trouble. Messer Ugolino came hither to see me yesterday, and seems rightly to be in Paradise. I am beside myself, and until

I do see how my mother's sickness turns out I shall not have an hour of peace. I leave you to imagine how greatly, loving you as I do, I have need of your presence for my consolation. I do think ye could come here, and stay sometimes here and sometimes in Florence, if ye did judge it well so to do. Many things I will keep to tell you by word of mouth. Come hither only when it is convenient for you, for I would not that ye should start upon the journey until such time as it suits you. I send you four old sonnets of mine and one new one for yourself; I know that it may be commended unto you like the others, being your own creature. I send you back the other of yours because you have not yet had it copied; the copy made for you shall be mine, and I will give you the one you sent me the other day. I write unto you without any spirit, which you have taken; without heart, which is yours; all the rest of me is sad because of you and because of mine adverse fortune, so that ye will find neither verse, nor good prose, nor sweetness whatsoever. I am, as ever, yours: I love you as much as I should and can; I desire nothing save to see you here and that my mother should recover. I commend all the women unto you; I did welcome the plums as I do everything from you; the turtle-doves died on the way here, wherefore Penelope is in despair. Speak sometimes with my words; remember the poor dead; love me; think of me, as I do think at all times of you. If I do trouble you, you must blame your own

goodness which makes me approach you with so great assurance.

"Written at the villa on the 25th day of August, 1546. "From your servant,

"TULLIA OF ARRAGON."

From this letter it appears that even at her villa Tullia did not lack the distractions of pleasant and learned society. Dr. Benucci, one of the interlocutors of the dialogue *Sull' Infinità d'Amore*, Ugolino Martelli, Bishop of Glandeva, Alessandro Arrighi (and not Arrigo Marte, as the learned Bongi supposed, through an error in the copying), frequently enjoyed Tullia's hospitality in her country retreat. As she betrays in her letter, Tullia was by no means happy, and her melancholy report of herself and her longing for the comfort of his presence should assuredly have moved the heart of the excellent Varchi, who, as a sign of his love, had sent her a basket of plums and to Penelope two doves, which died on the way, however, to the child's great grief.

Of Tullia's sojourn with her family beside the little Mensola we have no further records, we do not even know whether Varchi paid his ladylove the begged-for visit there. That their friendship continued is proved, however, by the following letter, written in November, 1546.

"MY DEAR MASTER,—If anything could make me feel more deeply indebted to you than doth your virtue

and natural goodness, without doubt the too great courtesy which ye do show me with your gifts would more than suffice thereto. But seeing that I cannot feel more obliged than I do at present, I do render unto you for your gift the most abundant thanks of which I am capable. And I do pray your lordship that you will not burden me with any more proofs of your courtesy; for my shoulders are small and weak, and are already bent by the great weight laid upon them. And it doth trouble me all the more in that I know I am not able to make you a proper return for your courtesy, not even a return of partial value, let alone the whole. Like God, ye must accept the goodness of mine heart and the greatness of my spirit, and ye must blame fortune, who is contrary to the fair and just desires of valiant hearts. We all await your lordship eagerly, and pray you to come and visit us if you can. I do never distrust your goodness or lovingkindness. Indeed, I do trust in that alone, nor seek or hope for any other aid, favour, or counsel save from your perfect judgment, your good feeling to us and your infinite courtesy. And such, and at your service do I remain, together with my mother and Penelope, and all the other persons in the house; and with all our hearts we do commend ourselves unto you, praying God that He will restore you to health and keep you happy.

"Given in Florence on the 19th day of November, ber, 1546. "Your servant,

"TULLIA OF ARRAGON."

## VII

IN the meantime, although still carrying on the Phyllis and Damon idyll with Varchi, Tullia began a new intrigue with a young man only twenty-four years old, handsome and well-born, of whom the courtesan had suddenly become enamoured. This was Piero di Lionardo di Niccolò Mannelli, born on August 4, 1522, and of sufficiently attractive appearance to strike the fancy of even such an experienced critic and huntress of manly beauty as was Tullia. She wrote him verses and sonnets (whether she invoked Varchi's assistance in the composing of them is not recorded !), and she loved him as sometimes a courtesan does love, when, after having sacrificed to all the gods of Olympus, she feels the necessity of worshipping with a special cult some god of her own devising.

It is probable that this new fancy was the last of her love affairs, but the noble youth whom she pursued with her ardent and imperious adoration seems either to have treated her with indifference or to have tormented her frequently with jealousy and reproaches. The motive which impelled this proud woman to own herself vanquished and a prisoner of love, in spite

of humiliating repulses and refusals, must have been one of those tardy passions which sweep all before them, and, like the smallpox, leave an ineffaceable mark on their victims. That this was so is proved by the fact that Tullia's best sonnet, the one which is quoted and included in all collections of poetry, is one addressed to Mannelli, wherein she deplores being caught again in the toils of love. Roughly translated, it runs as follows :—

"That eager nightingale who did escape
From hated cage, and through the smiling land
Flew swift to liberty and happy life
Midst leafy branches and the woodland green,
Was I myself, escaped from amorous bond,
Mocking the martyrdom and bitter pains
Of th' unspeakable grief those bear in themselves
Whose souls are wounded with too frequent love.
Again had I resumed the ways and garb
Which in Ciprigna's time I always wore,
And boasted proudly of their excellence,
When Love spake to me : 'Now thy stubborn will
I'll change,' said he ; and captive to thy power
He made me straight, and all my pain renewed."

This, as are also the other poems addressed to her youthful lover, is an obvious imitation of Petrarch ; but, nevertheless, they all betray the intensity of the flame which was consuming the heart of the poor courtesan, who, after having jested with the tender passion for so many years, was now herself feeling all the pangs of love despised which she had so often inflicted on others.

Nothing further is known concerning Tullia's love

affair with the young Florentine ; how long it lasted, how it ended, or whether it was known to Varchi and her other adorers. Seeing, however, that her sonnets to Mannelli were published during her lifetime, and that, according to the customs of those days, a woman was allowed to have several lovers at the same time, it may be supposed that she made no mystery of her relations with Mannelli. It is certain that when Muzio came to Florence in connection with his unfortunate mission to Siena, he realised that his place in Tullia's affections was now occupied by another, and that he must content himself with a merely platonic friendship.

Many years had elapsed between Muzio's first meeting with Tullia and the time when he saw her again in 1546, at which period he was in the service of Don Ferrante Gonzaga, Governor of Milan, who was employing him to try and persuade the town of Siena to submit once more to Imperial rule. In the meantime the poet politician had written, fought, travelled and loved much, and had also taken an active part in the religious questions then rife, and which had been chiefly aroused by Pier Paolo Vergerio, once Muzio's friend, but now persecuted by him in his quality of fervent Catholic.

Muzio did not succeed in his mission to Siena, because the Siennese declined to listen to his flatteries, and he had the mortification of seeing another secretary despatched to the Imperial Court upon this business. His afflicted soul derived much comfort, however, from

the circumstance that when he went to Florence to confer with the Grand Duke upon Siennese affairs, he was able to see his dear Tullia again. Although he was no longer the elegant courtier of Ferrarese days, and had his mind filled with more serious matters, already longing to be called "The Scourge of the Heretics," Muzio could not forget the fascinating *Tyrrhenia*. Neither had Tullia forgotten her ardent shepherd, and in a fine sonnet, whereby she sought to comfort him for the injustice he had suffered, she expresses the hope that he will once again sing her praises :—

> "I hope that by the Arno's banks my name
> In clearest notes by thee 'll again be sung."

Seeing her surrounded by scholars, warriors, and lords of high degree, and finding no mystery made of the fact that Varchi's protection was not a disinterested one, Muzio accepted the platonic invitation and limited his homage to speeches and verses. Varchi was prominent amongst Tullia's court as a sort of official protector and looked down upon the new arrival with the Olympic disdain of a man sure of his position. None the less does he place it on record in his famous dialogue *L'Ercolano*, wherein he discusses the ever-green question of the Italian tongue, that he held a long conversation with Muzio at Tullia's house, and he goes on to relate that when certain gentlemen declared that the Istrian poet, being a foreigner, was unable to write properly in the Florentine idiom, the indignant

Muzio immediately wrote a fresh sonnet to Tullia, in which, fully conscious of his own merit, he scorned his jealous critics and justly reminded them that poets are not made only by

"... Tuscan streams,
But by heaven, by art, by study, and holy love."

In the passage from *L'Ercolano* already referred to, Varchi speaks of Muzio as "a man not only learned and eloquent, but also loyal," whence it may be justly inferred that he did not fear him as a rival in love, since he distinguished him by praise thus worded.

It is a fact that both the tongues that wagged so industriously against their neighbours, and also certain sonnets still in manuscript, which rail against Varchi because of his relations with Tullia, are both silent on the subject of her intrigue with Mannelli, of which they could so easily have made use for the purpose of ridiculing the solemn academician. In a note to one of these abusive sonnets, Tullia is spoken of as the "Courtesan of the Academicians," and it hints further that she was bringing up her sister Penelope and other girls as she herself had been brought up by Giulia. In other passages it is asserted that Tullia's sonnets were really written by Varchi, but this is contradicted by his usual venomous enemy, Alfonso de' Pazzi. At last Varchi grew tired of these constant murmurings and accusations, and one fine day he shook the dust of the city off his feet and departed from Florence, postponing until a more

convenient time the continuation of his idyll with Tullia, and leaving her to the mercy of the countless suitors who filled the city with the sound of her name.

Side by side with more favourable reports, however, base and malicious accusations easily obtained credence; evil-speaking and calumny were rife in those days, and the life Tullia had led in various parts of Italy was not such as to place her beyond the reach of Florentine malice. The outward veil of respectability with which the *hetaera* covers herself is blown aside by the lightest wind, be the wearer literary or not; there were many who suspected that the poet's crown of laurel which Tullia wore was nothing but a fraud, and that the poems circulating under her name were really written by literary admirers in payment for favours accorded to their true authors. Not all the airs she gave herself as poetess and *virtuosa*, neither her court of adorers nor Varchi's protection sufficed to make Florence, the sceptical Florence who did not accept even her own great men unquestioningly, forget who Tullia of Arragon really was, or by what manner of mother she had been borne and brought up.

Lasca, in one of his satirical poems, mentions Tullia's name in connection with several others of her profession, but the Roman *hetaera* would assuredly not have cared to find herself classed with Nannina and Fioretta and Totta; with her poetical fame she considered herself far above these, and no longer to be looked upon as a courtesan. So without either

dread or suspicion, on October 19, 1546, she heard one of the usual laws promulgated by Duke Cosimo concerning the *ornaments and clothing of men and women*, by which law the Nanninas and Fiorettas of Florence were forbidden to wear "garments of cloth or silk of any description whatsoever," and were obliged to wear a "veil, napkin, handkerchief or other covering upon their heads, which should have a border of gold, silk, or other yellow material a finger's breadth wide, and so placed that it is visible unto all." The worshipful Eight of the Balia, the Keepers of the Law, and the Officers of Honesty were to see that the law was carried out, and to decide who amongst the many Florentine women of doubtful character were to be condemned to wear the shameful sign upon their heads.

Months passed, and, mindful of her efforts on behalf of Siena, Tullia never thought of the dangers which might suddenly confront her from the jealousy of her rivals or the enemies of her protectors, now that she no longer possessed a husband behind whom she could take refuge. The storm broke one evil day in April, 1547, when she was summoned before the magistrate and invited to comply with the law. The blow was all the greater because it was unforeseen. In despair, Tullia applied for help to Don Pedro of Toledo, nephew of the Duchess Eleonora, and the young man, who had always been kindly disposed towards her, advised her to appeal to the Duchess for mercy, presenting at the same time the many

sonnets which had been written for her by the most illustrious persons, "as though to show that it was a real mistake." But the petition must be carefully and cleverly composed in order to show the literary powers of the petitioner, who, in her dilemma, bethought herself of invoking Varchi's assistance with the fateful letter :—

"MOST HONOURED MASTER,—It is the opinion of Don Pedro that I should present the sonnets to the Duchess as speedily as possible, and with them a petition praying Her Excellency that, together with the Lord Duke, she would vouchsafe me such grace that at least I need not be compelled to wear the yellow mark; and that I should briefly relate how I do live most retired, and that if I do not obtain this grace from their Excellencies I shall be forced to leave Florence. Now in my great need I know not to whom I can better turn for help than to your lordship, because I have chosen you for my protector and guide in all important things, led thereto by your perfect judgment, your reasonable wisdom, your true goodness and the firm faith which I have in the kindness of your heart. Therefore, if ever your lordship did willingly take any trouble for me, if ever you did think to please and benefit me, I pray you now help and succour me with your knowledge in setting forth this petition, which will be no more difficult for your lordship than is a familiar conversation, and will be doing unto me the greatest kindness

that I could hope or desire; and seeing that I am already obliged unto you, I pray that you will do this of your goodness and because of the faith which I have in you. And the sooner you do it, the greater will be the benefit I shall derive therefrom. I remain your servant and I kiss your hands. Your lordship must let me know what I shall reply unto Don Pedro.

"Your lordship's servant,

"TULLIA OF ARRAGON."

Humiliated by her hard fate, the poor woman made no attempt either to resist the law or to rebel against the magistrates, as she had done at Siena when she had the protection of her husband's name; neither did she indignantly quit the inhospitable city, but, weary and humbled, she bowed her head and begged for mercy and grace. She scarcely had the courage to look her *Damon* in the face, her lover of yesterday, who wrote her the tenderest letters, and she appealed to him as she would have appealed to a master, without any excuse or pretence whatever, without even referring to their past intimacy. She asks him to help her out of the goodness of his heart, and because she has always trusted him. And she does not even ask to be entirely exempt from the law's restrictions, but only that she should not be forced to wear the yellow mark, showing herself willing to forego dresses of cloth and silk, as the law demands, and promising to ride no more in carriages or to adorn herself with garments sacred to gentlewomen and respectable characters.

The courtesan's star was on the wane, and perhaps she was beginning to feel the weariness which heralds the sad moment when even the most beautiful woman must realise that the face which confronts her in the mirror shows the marks of advancing age, when the first white hairs shine upon her brow and the wrinkles round her eyes bid her abandon her last hope. Henceforth Tullia gave up all effort and let herself float with the stream ; she felt that the river of her life was nearing its mouth, and would presently flow out into that great Dead Sea wherein even the most turbulent streams stagnate.

The courtesan is superstitious and a fatalist by nature, like some empress-adventuress, and at the first defeat, the first reverse of fortune, she loses her courage and gives up the game. In the presence of the magistrates Tullia had suddenly forgotten all her former pride as offspring of a royal house, and had shown none of the haughty grandeur she had displayed at Ferrara. *Fugaces labuntur anni !*

Varchi found it impossible to resist such earnest pleading, and in all probability he himself wrote the following petition which Don Pedro of Toledo handed to the Duchess :—

"To the Most Illustrious and Most Excellent Lady Duchess :

"Tullia of Arragon, your Excellency's most humble servant, having taken refuge in Florence from the last tumult in Siena, and not comporting herself

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

ELEONORA DI TOLEDO. BY BRONZINO.

[*To face page* 234.

as do the other women, hardly indeed ever leaving her chamber, not to speak of her house, by reason of sickness both of mind and body, doth pray Your Excellency, in order that she may not be obliged to depart, to move His Illustrious Excellency the Duke your Consort that he will grant her the favour that, even if she may no longer wear the few garments which have remained unto her use, as she doth petition in her writing, that she may at least be exempt from wearing the yellow veil. And adding this unto the other many and great obligations for which she is indebted unto Your Excellency, she will pray God that He will keep you ever in health and happiness."

The petition was granted, thanks to the Duchess, who persuaded the Duke to endorse it with his own hand in the words, "*Fasseli gratia per poetessa*," which may be seen upon the original document, still preserved in the State Archives of Florence and vouched for as authentic by the signature of Lelio Torelli, Minister to the Grand Duke. Torelli then forwarded to Tullia a document drawn up in accordance with Cosimo's orders by the Lieutenants and Counsellors of His Excellency the Duke of Florence, wherein it was stated with all due formality that in recognition of her rare gifts of poetry and philosophy and the talents which raised her above the other women, Tullia of Arragon was granted the special privilege of exemption from all restrictions relating to dress and behaviour ordered by the law passed on the 19th of October,

1546; and that being, therefore, set free from all observance of the above-mentioned law, the Signora Tullia of Arragon was henceforth at liberty to wear what garments and ornaments she pleased, and was in no way obliged to comply with any of the provisions of this same law.

Tullia had conquered, but it had been a victory for Pyrrhus, for she had been obliged to confess herself a courtesan, albeit different from the others of her class. What would the admirers, scholars, and poets of former days have said to this revelation? In order to cover the shame she had suffered, it was more than ever necessary that she bring her literary talents into notice, that she should publish the proofs of the honour paid her by the most distinguished writers, and the songs in praise of her virtue with which the most famous poets had rewarded her kindness. Moreover, it was absolutely necessary for her to obtain the favour of the Duchess of Florence and to win her goodwill for the future, and to find some way in which the name of the courtesan might appear side by side with that of her protectress. So she bethought herself of writing two sonnets, one on the death of the little prince, Don Pietro, which occurred on the 10th of June, 1542, and the other on the birth of Don Garzia on the 5th of July, 1547, and of having them published, together with the other things she had either written or received, with a grateful dedicatory preface addressed to the Duchess. As usual, she appealed to Varchi for assistance, and in a letter

written in July or August of 1547, she endeavoured to rouse him from his attitude of indifference towards her.

"Most honoured Master," she began, "I know that your lordship has entirely forgotten me, to my great sorrow, and I cannot imagine the reason. I have the comfort of knowing, however, that the cause of your forgetfulness was not born of me. I am aware that I should, therefore, flee all chance of causing you annoyance, but I cannot do it; and now I am forced again to trouble your lordship."

Then she goes on to beg his help in writing the letter to the Grand Duchess and asks him also to send her the sonnets, ending her appeal with the usual thanks and vows of eternal service and gratitude. Again Varchi complied with her wishes; he corrected the sonnets, and probably himself wrote the dedication which prefaced the volume, issued in that same year by Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari of Venice, to whom, on his departure from Florence in the autumn of 1547, Girolamo Muzio carried the *Dialogo dell' Infinità d'Amore* to be printed with a dedication to Cosimo.

After the kindness shown her by the Grand Duchess, Tullia endeavoured to attach herself to the court of the Medici and to win its favour with dedicatory sonnets and verses. She felt wretched and forsaken, and sought for new help and protection, hoping, perhaps, to find amongst the courtiers and soldiers some friend who would prove more reliable, if harder to please, than the scholars and writers who had hitherto been her recognised followers. When in 1548 Giovambattista

Savello succeeded Stefano Colonna as head of the Ducal troops, Tullia tried to attract his attention with verses, and, according to her custom, sent her effusions first to Varchi for correction. Messer Benedetto, accustomed by now to her infidelities both of heart and pen, could not refuse a prayer expressed as follows :—

"Dear Master,—For a long time now have I been the servant of the most illustrious lord, Giambattista Savello, who is here as general in the service of His Excellency, and methinks I have failed in my duty in not having already shown how constantly I do think of His Excellency, especially as he thinks of me every day and holds converse with me. Wherefore have I set down in some fourteen lines that which I desire should be put into a sonnet, and which is according unto my desires if not unto his infinite merit. And seeing that I am not sufficiently well able to do it myself, I do pray your lordship that so far as my prayers may avail with you and your courtesy, and by the faith which I have in your goodness, that ye will do me the favour of so altering that which I dare to send unto you that I shall not need to blush for it. And I pray you also to tear in pieces that which I have roughly written down and upon which I have bestowed no care, in order that it may be altogether the work of your lordship."

The letter ends in the usual way—thanks, excuses, promises.

The good-natured Varchi corrected and copied as he was bidden, content to fill the office of secretary since it enabled him, at least, to know who were the new saints of the Tullian calendar. He could refuse nothing to her who had never refused him anything, and he seems to have obeyed her commands even to the point of destroying the rough copy of her sonnet to Savello, seeing that it has not been found amongst the letters. From being a lover he had passed to the position of confidant, and with him Tullia made no secret of her sudden fancies for one new-comer after another.

One evening towards the autumn of 1548, Tullia received a visit from the scoundrel Giordano Orsini, afterwards all too notorious as the husband of Cosimo's daughter Isabella. She immediately became enthusiastic about him, and the next morning set to work to compose a sonnet in praise of this delightful person, sending it, as usual, to Varchi for revision, accompanied by a letter in which she showed that she had not forgotten the arts of flattery and deception which were her most valued weapons. "Since Fortune did not permit me to know the valour, courtesy and goodness of Signor Giordano until last night," wrote Tullia to Varchi, "it was not until this morning that I was able to take up my pen and endeavour, by means of it, to show unto his lordship that I do know a part of his worthiness and desire to sing of it, albeit in discordant notes. Only at this moment have I given birth to the sonnet which I do send you here-

with. . . . And but that your infinite goodness is well known unto me, and that I do judge your heart according unto mine own, which would never weary of serving you if it had the power so to do, I should be ashamed of having troubled you so often. . . . And I pray your lordship to remember that the time draws near when my body must leave you, and that I desire to behold you again with the eyes of my body as I constantly do with the eyes of my mind."

The most important thing about this letter is that it contained the rough copy of the sonnet written out by Tullia herself, so that we have indubitable proof of what she was capable in poetry when left to herself and before her master's pen had corrected her efforts and given them the perfection they lacked. And, to tell the truth, those fourteen lines she had thrown off in such haste were very far from being perfect, and it is easy to understand why Tullia urged Varchi, in another letter, to destroy the rough copy she forwarded to him for his approval. It is to be regretted that Varchi's amended version has not been preserved together with Tullia's original draft, for it would be interesting to see how he worked the miracle of giving sense and form to her halting and impossible periods! This affords some ground for the accusation in the *Zibaldone*, of the *Etruscan Academician*, namely, that Tullia's sonnets were all written by Varchi, and it would also explain why she made such exertions to win him for her friend and lover, and, when their love had cooled, to keep him as her faithful adviser and co-

operator. She had done exactly the same thing with Muzio; the *Dialogo dell' Infinità d'Amore* had been printed through his efforts, just as Varchi had helped her with the publication of her *Rime*.

But the charming idyll of *Phyllis* and *Damon* was now played out. After spending nearly three years in Florence, Tullia, as she had already announced, found herself obliged to leave that city. Before she went she wrote Varchi a farewell letter—a melancholy, almost romantic sort of epistle—in which she spoke of the future life, of her eternal gratitude for the numberless kindnesses he had shown her, and informed him that she was sending him a pair of doves, two bottles for water and one of malmsey wine, and an alabaster salt-cellar, the usual gifts which were supposed to preserve good friendship. "I cannot tell your lordship," she wrote, "how strange it seems unto me to be leaving you, with my body, that is to say; but if I did speak the truth it would scarcely be believed, and my words would perchance be considered only as expressions of ceremony. But I will not speak of my grief, and will only pray your lordship with all the affection of mine heart that ye will not entirely forget me, and that every time that I do send you something of mine ye will deign to correct and ornament it, according unto your customary goodness, as my master and mine own possession. And this, above all things, your lordship must believe that ye may command my service whensoever ye have need of me and wheresoever I may be; for in my need I

did ever have recourse unto your goodness and loving-kindness. My mother and Penelope do commend themselves unto you and remain for ever your servants. And I myself likewise. I do purpose to depart upon the fifteenth of this month without fail, if so God will.

"Written from my house, the 10th of October, 1548.

"Your lordship's

TULLIA OF ARRAGON."

## VIII

WHEN, in the melancholy autumn days of 1548, Tullia quitted Florence, Varchi, and that literary republic with whom she had found such favour, she felt that her career as a poetess had closed for ever. Apparently Fortune would never smile upon her again; gone was the time of glorious love and famous conquests, her triumphs both as beauty and as poetess were things of the past. It would seem from the preface to the *Guerrin Meschino*, which was written during the last days of her sojourn in Florence, that her thoughts were turning to God, "from whom alone cometh all good," and that she was experiencing that indescribable weariness which brings disgust with the things of this world. Now that the storms which had theatened her in Florence had passed away, she had hoped to be able to carry out her last idea, and by doing good works and leading an austere life to make people forget those past misdeeds of which "necessity had been the cause."

But Fate would not grant her even this last desire,

and on the 15th of October of this same year she quitted Florence with her mother and sister, to resume the wandering life from which she had rested for a brief space. Perhaps, as Bongi surmises, the actual earnings of that sort of Florentine Academy did not suffice for the needs of the household; perhaps Giulia meditated bringing out Penelope, who already promised to surpass her sister both in mental and physical gifts, on that vast and wealthy Roman stage whereon Tullia herself had obtained her earliest triumphs. Who knows? It may even be that Tullia, though at the same time thanking the Lord for having turned her heart to Himself while she was still comparatively young and attractive, did not feel so perfectly repentant but that she regretted sacrificing to God that which might still be desired by men. Perhaps it was her mother who persuaded her to postpone for a little while her conversion and penitence until the family had made better provision for its needs. Truly, it would have been a sin not to have profited by the gifts which heaven had so amply bestowed, and failing Tullia, the chief support of the family, the mother would of necessity have been compelled to sacrifice Penelope. We should prefer to think that love for the young sister, and the desire to save her from the ignominy she herself had suffered, induced the courtesan-poetess to return to that path of vice which adverse destiny had marked out for her almost from her very birth.

To return to Rome after the lapse of so many years,

the fighting of so many battles, the enduring of so much suffering and the strain of so many adventures; to exhibit herself to the Roman public less youthful and less fair than when she left, to find herself face to face once more with her former rivals, exposed to the malicious tongues of the younger and the jealous hatred of the elder ones, now when she was no longer possessed of all the charms and irresistible witchery of other days, must have seemed to Tullia one of those sacrifices which earn for the victim the right to enter Paradise without delay. The Rome to which she returned was the Rome of Paul III., the Pope who had restored the Inquisition and was energetically persecuting all heretical depravity whilst awaiting the era of a regenerate and more moderate Catholicism; and it was a very different city from that of Clement VII., where priests and laity and officials alike had led the most unfettered of lives, and the throne of St. Peter had shone with the utmost splendour of a pagan Renaissance. The reign of the *hetaeræ* was over; they must submit to be registered as mere courtesans, and the gay life 'twixt love and beauty, feasting and poetry was now a forgotten art.

From the book of the *Tassa delle Cortigiane* we learn that, in 1549, Tullia was living in Campo Marzo, in a fine house near the Palazzo Carpi; and here, on the 1st of February of that same year, died the young Penelope, and was buried in the church of Sant' Agostino "beneath a marble tomb, erected to the memory of her beauty and intelligence."

*Argia* had found peace and safety in the grave, to which she was soon followed by her mother *Jole*, and later by *Tyrrhenia* herself. Thus, through death or neglect, the poor *hetaeræ* lost one after another all those she held most dear on earth.

## IX

SEVEN years later, on March 2, 1556, Messer Virgilio Grandinelli, accompanied by the necessary witnesses, made his way to the quarter of the Trastevere and entered the lodging-house kept by Matteo Moretti of Parma ; here, in a room of this humble dwelling, tended by the host's wife Lucrezia and her servant Cristofora, Tullia of Arragon lay upon a bed of sickness from which she was never to rise again.

Maestro Panunzio, the physician, had given up all hope of saving her, and had advised her to set her worldly affairs in order whilst she was still in possession of all her senses. Wrapped in a garment of black wool, her hair twisted round her head, with pallid face, and great, wide-open eyes that seemed to be looking into space, the courtesan showed all the signs of a cruel disease. Of her once famous beauty no trace remained, save, perhaps, the brightness of her eyes, the wasted oval of her face and the waxen whiteness of her hands. Instead of the strings of pearls painted by Bonvicino in his portrait of her, her hair now bore only streaks of silver, and instead of the bright colouring immortalised by the Venetian's brush,

her face now showed only the pallor of approaching death. The black-robed figure motionless upon her pillows was but the shadow of the beauty of other days, who surely never foresaw midst all her worldly triumphs that in her last hour she would be alone in that poor room, abandoned to the care of hirelings, and that not one of all the poets and scholars who fawned on her and praised her in her days of prosperity would trouble themselves about her even so far as to write the epitaph for her tomb.

Host Matteo had introduced the notary and his witnesses into the sick room. Lucrezia and Cristofora were weeping in a corner, whilst Tullia, collecting all her remaining strength, dictated her last will to Messer Virgilio Grandinelli.

"Firstly, I do commend my soul unto the Most High God and unto His glorious Mother, the Virgin Mary, and unto all the Court of Heaven.

"To Lucrezia my servant, wife of Matteo my host, I leave the furniture of this chamber; that is to say, the green chairs and the bed whereon I do now lie; also a dress of black wool, already worn, and opening in front. I leave unto her a new scarlet habit, that is to say, a petticoat, a piece of white cloth with purple stripes and one with yellow stripes, and a dress after the Roman fashion, of striped cloth, and a veil. I also leave her ten golden *scudi*, and she shall be paid for the wine which I had of her. The girl Cristofora, my servant, shall have a dress of ordinary black cloth, and ten golden *scudi*.

"To the poor orphans I leave five golden *scudi*. To the Company of the Crucified, I leave a plain vestment of black taffetta. To the church of Sant' Agostino, I leave half a *scudo* worth of wax lights yearly, to be burned before my tomb upon the Feast of All Souls; and if the friars do not burn it, my heirs shall not be obliged to give it again. I leave half a *scudo* in order that every year the mass of San Gregorio may be said for the repose of my soul. Unto Maestro Panunzio, my physician, I leave a physician's dress of black wool, which shall be made newly for him."

Here there was a long pause; the voice of the dying woman was almost spent; she made a sign for the notary to draw nearer to her, and with difficulty gave utterance to her closing words.

It was, perhaps, from a last feeling of shame that these final directions were whispered, above all the recommendation to the notary not to forget the obligatory legacy from all courtesans in favour of the Convertite nuns, as ordered by the bull of Pope Clement VII. As universal legatee she named the youth Clelio, now "under the guardianship of Messer Pietro Chiocca, carver to the Cardinal Cornaro," with the condition that he could not touch the capital until he attained the age of twenty-five years, and that the interest should be employed for his support and education. If Clelio should die before reaching the age of twenty-five, Chiocca was to fall heir to the interest of the money, and on his death the whole sum was to be distributed amongst various charities.

Tullia further directed that she was to be buried in Sant' Agostino in her mother's grave. "At my funeral," she added, "I desire that none should attend save the friars of Sant' Agostino and the Company of the Crucified, to which I belong, and I desire to be interred at sunset, simply, and without any ceremony." As her executors she named Monsignore Antonio Trivulzio, Bishop of Toulon, and Messer Mario Frangipane.

When she had finished speaking, the notary handed her the pen, and with trembling hand she signed her name at the foot of the document, *I, Tullia of Arragon, with mine own hand.* Then it was tied and a seal placed upon the cord, and in the presence of the witnesses it was given into the charge of Messer Virgilio Grandinelli, who was to open it again only after her death.

And then, having thus fulfilled the final duty of her life, and having dismissed the strangers and the women, poor Tullia was left to spend alone her last hours in that world which had given her no abiding consolation, wherein she had not even known a mother's love, and which she was forced to quit without even having first embraced her son Clelio.

A few days later, probably on the 14th of March, a simple bier was borne into the church of Sant' Agostino at the hour of sunset and placed in front of a tomb near the high altar. And here, reunited, mother and daughters were at last granted that peace which in all their wretched lives they had never known.

# THE TWILIGHT OF THE PAST

# THE TWILIGHT OF THE PAST

THE 17th of September, 1814, was not a Saturday like any other in Florence. Since the dawn the whole town had been in motion, and behind the narrow openings covered with oiled linen that lighted the lowly dwellings of the poor, as well as the diamond-shaped glass panes with their leaden frames which adorned the palaces of the rich, the ever-curious Florentines were gazing down into the streets swarming with people; with peasants in short hose, with townspeople in their best clothes, with police, with priests dressed according to the careless French fashion in all sorts of colours, and with soldiers, both Tuscan and Austrian, who, to the sound of fife and drum, were marching from the guard house at the Palazzo Vecchio, and from their barracks, towards the Duomo and Porta S. Gallo. Many were the horsemen, very many the carriages; private carriages these, with lackeys on the box or standing up behind, moving slowly owing to the pressure of the crowd, being large, heavy and massive chariots, bearing, in a sort of pomp, ladies and cavaliers arrayed in the splendid dresses of cere-

mony which the restoration had inherited from the Empire.

By seven o'clock the soldiers were already posted along the streets and inside the Duomo; the tramp of feet and the rolling sea of heads proceeded towards Porta S. Gallo, and then, passing the triumphal arch, went on to Ponte Rosso and extended far as the eye could reach along the Bologna road. Between the files of soldiers went a long line of couriers on horseback, outriders, grand carriages with court officials, chamberlains, magistrates, civic functionaries. At eight, the sound of the first gun from the fort of Belvedere and the ringing of the bells of all the churches announced to the faithful Tuscans that his Imperial and Royal Highness the Archduke Ferdinand III., Grand Duke of Tuscany, starting from Villa Capponi, in the suburb called *La Pietra*, where he had made a brief halt to rest and change his travelling dress, was about to make his entry into Florence. Received by his new Grand Chamberlain, Cavaliere Amerigo Antinori, and by the two chamberlains on duty that week, Tommaso Corsi and Silvestro Aldobrandini, the Grand Duke, whose journey from Firenzuola had been one prolonged triumph, after having put on his full uniform, took his place in his chariot with his six horses arrayed in their finest harness, in company with the major domo, Major Don Giuseppe Rospigliosi, and the Grand Chamberlain, Cavaliere Amerigo Antinori.

The grand coach was followed by another drawn by six horses, in which sat the two chamberlains for the

week, Corsi and Aldobrandini, together with the two chamberlains, Bodeck and Reineck, whom the Grand Duke had brought with him from Wurzburg. Around the equipage of the sovereign galloped, proud of their fine swords and their plumed helmets, twelve officers of the new corps of dragoons, while the major in command of them rode beside the door of the carriage. Along the road, amid the clamour of bells, the roar of the cannon, the shouts of the people and the orders of the officers to present arms, down the slope of the Pellegrino, in the middle of a cloud of dust, escorted by the dragoons and all shining and glittering in the sun, advanced the carriage of the prince. The shouts of *Evviva*, the clapping of hands, the cries, growing ever more enthusiastic, of the crowd, increased with their increasing numbers.

When the sovereign reached Porta S. Gallo, the former senator, now Gonfaloniere of the Commune of Florence, Girolamo Bartolommei, the priors of the guilds and the civic magistrates, going forth to meet the Grand Duke, presented him with the keys of the city. At this point the Gonfaloniere wished to speak an address, already prepared, but the emotion felt both by the worthy man himself and by the sovereign made them incapable of articulate speech, and only the tears of the priors and the Gonfaloniere expressed the depth of the homage which, in the name of the city, they rendered to their beloved prince.

The scene might have a comic side, as suggesting other entrances, when the official addresses were not

interrupted by tears, but by yawns or half-hidden sneers; but we may be certain that these tears, shed by the Florentine magistrates, were honest and sprang from the heart, and that the reception given to Ferdinand III. in Florence and throughout Tuscany, when he once more set foot there after fifteen years of exile, was spontaneous and sincere.

The entry of the Grand Duke resembled a triumph, as his return to the dominions of which he had been deprived by the French invasion seemed the work of retributive justice. The good people of Florence had seen him leave his palace in that city on a sad morning in March, 1799, and had accompanied him to the gates, with many tears. Ferdinand had taken the road to Vienna, resigned and confident, advising his subjects to remain quiet and to trust in Providence. Now, after so many changes, after so many shocks and defeats, he returned as a father comes back among his children, with a conscience void of offence, sure of deserving and possessing the affection of his people.

The entry into the city was effected with great pomp. On the Piazza San Marco, converted into an amphitheatre, appeared a triumphal group, representing Victory, Concord, Justice and Peace drawing a car on which was seated the effigy of Ferdinand III. The most illustrious artists of the Academy had worked upon this group and its architectural surroundings; Morrocchesi, Pietro Bagnoli, Francesco Benedetti, and the pupils of the Eugenian

College had celebrated in song the return of the best and most desired of princes. From Porta S. Gallo to the Duomo, where the benediction was given, from the Duomo to the Pitti Palace, and in the evening in the Cascine and in the streets of Florence, all through the next day, and on those when the holidays granted by the Commune were celebrated with chariot races in the Piazza Santa Maria Novella, with illuminations and fireworks, the cries of *Evviva*, the applause and shouts of joy had no end. The Hereditary Prince, afterwards Leopold II., the Archduchesses Maria Theresa and Louisa were also received with enthusiastic greetings on their arrival, which took place after that of the Grand Duke. The songs of the poets voiced the sentiments of the people:

"We see thy virtues mirrored in thy son;
It is enough, if he resemble thee.
Thee did Etruria long for, and hath won.
Wider and prouder other States may be;
None a more loving, faithful people know:
Greatest of Monarchs, he who reigneth so."

* * * * *

The return of Ferdinand III. closed for Florence a period full of revolution, tumult and terror. In those fifteen years what shocks had they endured, what commotions; how many triumphal entries, how many terror-stricken and precipitous flights! In 1799, General Gaultier drove out the Grand Duke, planted the tree of liberty on the Piazzas of Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce, arrested, at Certosa, poor

old Pope Pius VI. and sent him off to die of grief, a prisoner in France, robbed the galleries and the Pitti Palace of all their masterpieces, and, a few months later, July 5, 1799, quitted Florence with his soldiers. The Austrians returned and restored the government of Ferdinand III., while the mob and the peasants robbed and insulted those who had been partisans of the French. But then came the brilliant victories of Bonaparte, and, after Marengo, the Austrians decamped in their turn; and on October 15, 1800, Florence saw the entry of General Dupont, and then that of Miollis, the friend of Corilla Olimpica; and on March 27, 1801, that of Joachim Murat, who in the name of his brother-in-law Bonaparte, took possession of Tuscany. On the 12th of August there was another triumphal entry, but this time of a king. By the Treaty of Madrid, Tuscany was transformed into the kingdom of Etruria, and Ludovico di Borbone, already Duke of Parma, came to take possession of it. A short and inglorious reign. On May 29, 1803, Ludovico died and was succeeded by the infant, Carlo Ludovico, his son, with the title of Second King of Etruria; and he, on December 10, 1807, left Florence, with his mother Maria Luisa, to take possession of another kingdom, that of Lusitania, conferred upon him by the Emperor Napoleon, in whose name General Reille occupied Florence. On May 24, 1808, Tuscany was divided into the three Departments of the Arno, the Mediterranean, and the Ombrone, was united to the Empire and governed by a *Giunta di governo*,

or council of regency, presided over by Baron Menou, general of the French troops. Less than a year later, on March 3, 1809, the three Departments were transformed into a Grand-duchy with which was invested Elisa, sister of the Emperor, wife of Felice Baciocchi, Princess of Piombino and Duchess of Lucca. On the 1st of April, Elisa made her entry into Florence. The city retained two agreeable memories of her reign, the military reviews which she used to command on horseback, followed by her husband Felice, and the oil lamps put up at the expense of the commune in the streets of the city, after 1809. But scarcely five years had elapsed when, on February 1, 1814, she in her turn fled from Florence to Lucca, whither she had already despatched the princess, her daughter, and (by night) several large carts loaded with plate and other objects of value. This year (1814) was, in truth, an eventful one for Florence, full of strange surprises. The French troops had nearly all left Florence, some time before Madame Elisa did, and the Neapolitan troops came in, headed by the Marshal Minutolo, who in the name of Murat, or rather of Joachim-Napoleon, King of the Two Sicilies, took possession of the city. To Minutolo followed Lieutenant-General Lechi, *comandante superiore* of Tuscany, who after a siege of more than twenty days succeeded in bringing about the evacuation of the Fortezza da Basso and of Belvedere by the French troops who had still remained there. Later, when Tuscany was entirely occupied by Neapolitan troops, the

reinstatement of Ferdinand III. was established by the "Act of Parma," Murat having been compelled by the Convention of Schiarino Rizzino to confine himself to the kingdom of Naples. On the 26th of April there arrived in Florence the Duke of Rocca Romana, Commissioner for His Majesty the King of Naples, for the consignment of Tuscany to the Commissioner-General of the Grand Duke Ferdinand, in whose name, on May 1, 1814, Don Giuseppe Rospigliosi, as Minister Plenipotentiary, took possession of it. Ten changes of government in fifteen years, of which hardly a trace is left in the writings of the time! The only political periodical then published in Florence changed its title three times during a single week, in February, 1814. It was *Journal of the Department of the Arno* until the 3rd, on the 5th it was *The Political Journal of Florence*, and on the 10th *The Gazette of Florence*. But though it changed its title it did not change its proprietor, and continued to be printed by Giuseppe Fantosini at Santa Maria in Campo. Governments might change, but the only men of character, printers, of that day, changed not at all.

* * * * *

The Restoration meant, for the Tuscans, prosperity, peace and quiet. Of the French and Neapolitan governments, they retained the memory only of the Vandalic spoliation of their galleries and museums, of the forced taxes, and of the promising young men who were sent away to die far from home, whilst

certain beneficent legislative reforms were forgotten. But they had other grievances; the continued and intolerable pressure of taxation, the persecution of priests and of persons in religion, the Frenchifying of all public business, the obligation of renouncing their native tongue, and the oppression of an absent lord. The Tuscans, by natural disposition, language and ancient tradition, have always felt themselves to be, above all things, *Tuscan*, and in no wise disposed to herd with other peoples and to lose themselves in the confusion caused by a mixture of races, among whom they ran the risk, I know not whether from shyness or timidity, of feeling themselves somewhat overpowered. The Neapolitan or Murattian fusion was not to their taste, particularly as they were quicker to perceive its defects than its advantages. As to reforms, they remembered those initiated by Peter Leopold, and left as an heritage to Ferdinand; they remembered the old prosperous days of plenteous crops untrodden by foreign troops, undevastated by greedy tax-gatherers; they remembered their prince, who dwelt among his subjects, a good, simple, easy-going, affectionate master. They loved the patience, even the severity of his paternal rule, even his imperiousness, for the father's castigation is no insult, but a proof of thoughtful care. In these later days, looseness of life had become outrageous and disgusting, especially in those who had, to use the proverbial expression, flung their cassocks among the nettles, and all these motives caused them strongly to desire a

return to the old state of things. And most especially was it desired and prayed for by the nobles, who under the Napoleonic Code, had found themselves, in exchange for divorce, of which they had never felt the want, deprived of their ancient privileges for the benefit of younger favourites of fortune. The abolition of the religious orders and the absorption of their property by the State had given a shock to the idea of property; the want of strong arms taken off the fields by conscription was injurious to agriculture. The Napoleonic wars, fought in far-distant lands to further the ambition of one man, had cost too much good Tuscan blood, and left in too many families a void not easily forgotten.

Ferdinand III., taught wisdom by events, had returned to Tuscany from exile more desirous of peace than of power, resolved to follow the dictates of his own benevolent nature rather than the imprudent rancour of Metternich. Tuscan as he was by disposition and by remembrance, and neglected in Austria, he disliked the Germans, whom he called *wooden*, and the Court of Vienna with its haughtinesses, its jealousies and its rigid etiquette, inspired him with both ridicule and pity. At Salzburg, which place they had given him after making no end of difficulty about it, he complained of the climate, of solitude, of the position of the city, of the want of ices, and of his grief at never seeing any Italians.

He named, as his Secretary of State, Count Vittorio Fossombroni, and gave him for companions in the

THE GRAND DUKE FERDINAND III.

[*To face page* 262.

Ministry, but with lower grades, Don Neri Corsini for the Interior, and Leonardo Frullani for Finance. Fossombroni, an excellent mathematician and hydraulic engineer, "did the best he could, and from 1815 onwards was the Minister of the quietest sovereign in the quietest province of Italy." [1]

Prince and minister were fully agreed as to the dignity of the sovereign and the independence of the State. Ferdinand III. was outspoken, and did not disguise his admiration for Napoleon, to whom alone, and not to his brother the Emperor, he owed the principality of Würzburg, given to him as a pledge by the Treaty of Luneville. To those who applied to him for titles or places, alleging as a claim that they had never served the usurper, he replied: "You did ill; I served him, and so might you." Adverse to the policy of Metternich, which he considered injurious to the interests of his house, and jealous of his own independence, one day when the Count of Fiquelmont, the Austrian minister, attempted to arouse his suspicions with regard to certain of the most prominent citizens of Florence, he replied, "Your Excellency will inform your sovereign, as I will inform *my brother*, that for my own subjects, I alone am responsible."

With less haughtiness, nay, even with a smoothness of manner bordering upon irony, the minister of this excellent prince, who was a man of wit as well as a man of science, and to whom mathematics had taught the equation of politics and good sense, replied

[1] Martini. *Giusti's Memoires*.

to the Austrian minister, who asked for 300,000 *scudi* on account of a certain debt which he declared to be owing to the Emperor of Austria, in the following terms :

"Your Excellency, I might dispute the point as to whether this money were owing to His Majesty, but it would be time lost, for I have not got the 300,000 *scudi*."

"But His Majesty the Emperor wants them."

"If your Excellency were to inform me that His Majesty the Emperor had taken into his head to ask me for 300,000 elephants, I could but reply—I have not got them.'

"But I must write to Vienna." . . . .

"Your Excellency will write that the Minister Fossombroni is always ready to comply with the demands of His Majesty the Emperor, whatever he may deign to ask, but that at this moment he has neither 300,000 *scudi* nor 300,000 elephants."

Another anecdote which shows the man.

His private secretary (then more modestly entitled his confidential clerk) brought to him one morning a number of papers for signature ; and then, as happened later on to De Sanctis, one of Victor Emmanuel's ministers famous for his absence of mind, mistaking the inkstand for the jar of sand, he blotted all the sheets. The official felt himself turning into stone, but let slip a "And now?"

"And now," replied Fossombroni with his usual *bonhomie*, "we will go to luncheon."

THE TOWER OF THE ADIMARI AT THE ENTRANCE OF VIA CALZAJOLI.

[*To face page* 265.

"But—all these affairs?"

"To-morrow, my friend, to-morrow. The luncheon may burn, and the State won't."

"And for that day," writes the clever son of that same secretary, "the couriers did not start; Tuscany governed herself, and nobody was the wiser." "The world goes of itself," Fossombroni used to say, considering the phrase as a profound political aphorism. Wherefore, many men of to-day, some of them ministers, have blamed him. But, in my opinion, it is better so. It would be a good deal worse if ministers had the guiding of it.

Whatever other people may think, Tuscany under the restored government of Ferdinand III. enjoyed happy years, full of material prosperity and mild liberalism, with laws which, if not absolutely excellent, were certainly applied with great moderation. A state lying, as Niccolini the poet put it, between Orbetello and Scaricalasino was not difficult to govern. The people rested tranquilly after all their ups and downs, rather supine if you like, but honest and safe in those years, protected from the insolent interference of Austria by the vigilance of the sovereign and his ministers. The aristocracy, petted by the Court, was wisely withheld from any political prominence that might appear overbearing; the lower classes were favoured; the average minds, so easily guided, were flattered by clever blandishments; exiles and liberals were watched without excessive rigour. The aim striven for was that Tuscans of all classes and

conditions should be united in love of their country and of their sovereign and form one single family. To the Grand Duke repose and easy life were welcome; he liked the comforts of his position better than its cares; he loved the idleness of his Medicean villas, where he enjoyed the company of men of culture, like Gino Capponi, who was his chamberlain.

Capponi used to relate how once the ministers arrived at Poggio a Cajano in a great hurry from Florence, to hold a Council of State. When the ministers were gone, the Grand Duke called Capponi into the hall in which the Council had been held and which was hung with damask brocaded with flowers, and pointing out certain roses which recurred from time to time in the pattern of the silk, asked him if it appeared to him that they all had the same number of leaves. Capponi replying in the affirmative, the Grand Duke rejoined, "You are mistaken, because in that corner there is one which has one leaf less than the rest, perhaps through the weaver's carelessness." And it was true, but the Grand Duke to have discovered it, must, during the council, have paid more attention to the leaves of the roses than to the business of the State!

VIA CALZAJOLI, BEFORE THE ENLARGEMENT.
*(From a contemporary drawing.)*

[*To face page 267*

## II

THE canvas is small and narrow. The figures, too, are small.

The Florence of that period was but the bud of the Florence of our day, and which has bloomed into the flower so full of fragrance and of colour. It then contained about 80,000 inhabitants, and inside the perimeter of its fourth and last circle of walls were market and other gardens, and fields enough to fill up a good third of the whole space. In the centre the streets around the old market and the Ghetto, whose destruction we ourselves have witnessed, were narrow, inconvenient and crooked. Via dei Calzaioli, then called Via de' Pittori and Corso degli Adimari, was so narrow that two carriages could not pass through it abreast, and when it was widened in 1842, by throwing down the old tower which dominated its entrance into Piazza del Duomo, the gentle muse of Emilio Frullani thus lamented the departure of the ancient landmark :

"Thou, too, must go, old tower
Of Adimari's line ;
But through no foeman's power
Shall fall those stones of thine.
Men, greedy of mere gain, shall lay thee low
With cruel shouts, more ruthless than the foe."

The Lung' Arni then ended at Ponte alla Carraja, and a little above Piazza Cavalleggeri; on the other side, at Santa Trinita and at the little tower of Santa Rosa. Very narrow were Via Martelli, Via de' Cerretani, Via de' Panzani, and Via de' Tornabuoni, where the *loggetta* of Palazzo Corsi was on the side towards Palazzo Strozzi. The Cascine stretched as far up as Santa Lucia sul Prato and were reached from Porta Prato or from the Porticciola of Piazza delle Mulina, where Via Curtatone now is. Between Via Valfonda and Via della Scala, over the area now covered by the station and the adjacent streets, extended gardens and farms. Between Via San Zanobi and the present Via Guelfa as far as the Wall were farms and gardens; gardens also between Via del Maglio (now Via Lamarmora) and Via Gino Capponi (then Via S. Sebastiano), and in that large square bounded by Borgo Pinti, Via de' Pilastri and Borgo la Croce, and the Walls from Porta alla Croce to the old Porta Pinti, where the closed Protestant cemetery now stands. In Piazza del Granduca (Piazza della Signoria) between Calimaruzza and Vaccherecia the Tetto de' Pisani (Pisans' roof) covered the building occupied by the Post Office, where entered and whence issued to the sound of a cornet the public coaches, with postilions arrayed in varied hues riding the horses, lively and vivacious at their departure, covered with dust and sweat on their longed-for arrival, with a crowd of curious people, loafers and boys surrounding and tormenting them. Through the gratings of the Post

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

THE PONTE ALLE GRAZIE BEFORE ITS RESTORATION.

[*To face page* 268.

Office were distributed the letters and papers, and on post-days (for at that blest period even the post had some rest), all those who expected anything crowded under the Tetto de' Pisani, and asked for letters with the same anxiety with which they ask for them to-day and were met by the same exasperating indifference. Ordinarily, except in the principal streets or on some great Church holiday or civic anniversary, few people were to be seen. There were no public vehicles; until 1824, S. Fiacre had no devotees among the Florentines. In that year there appeared five or six, which were stationed in the Piazza del Duomo near the Stone of Dante. In Via Larga (now Via Cavour) opposite the Palazzo Riccardi the grass grew between the stones. The shops were modest enough, and built in an antique fashion, like the oldest ones on the Ponte Vecchio and those which have disappeared in recent years from the vicinity of the Badia. They had usually a low wall in front, in which there was a small narrow door, and on each side of the door narrow openings filled with greenish glass which shed a not too brilliant light within; the prices were as modest as the appearance of the shops. After 1814 more elegant establishments began to appear, and also the first plate-glass windows, mentioned in his *Manuscript Chronicle* by Gaetano Nardi, cook to the illustrious Marchesi Niccolini, who left to his *padroni* more than twenty volumes of contemporary history, in which he discoursed on archæology and public buildings, on religion and politics, bearing

witness to the close connection there always has been between politics and the kitchen.

Life in Florence in those days, public life at least, consisted of Church festivals, of processions, solemn and splendid; of fairs for the sale of hazel-nuts and of basket work and earthenware; of reviews, or, as they were then called, *military parades;* in races by barebacked horses (*corse de' barbari*) which were run for pennons and banners. There was the *festa di San Giovanni* (St. John the Baptist's Day) with the Roman chariot race in the Piazza Santa Maria Novella, and fireworks which generally dropped down in a luminous shower of rockets from the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio. There were masquerades, there were *festini* under the arches of the Uffizi, and there were balls. The *Scoppio del Carro*, that is, the flight of the dove on Easter Even, the fair at the SS. Annunziata on the 8th of September with illuminations and paper lanterns (*rificolone*) brought into the city crowds of peasants and inhabitants of the neighbouring towns, good quiet people (*terrazzani*) who during these solemnities consumed with parsimonious *gourmanderie* one of those ices which were sold at the Bottegone, cool and delicious, rising pyramidally from a slender and shallow little glass. The processions and the solemn services in the churches, re-established in 1815 when the great functions at the Feasts of Corpus Domini and St. John the Baptist were renewed, filled the souls of all the people with delight, and all such as could not attend them, with regret. Giacomo

*Photo]* [*Brogi.*

THE *CORSA DEI BARBERI* (A RACE BY BAREBACKED HORSES).
(*Picture by Giovanni Signorini.*)

[*To face page* 270.

Leopardi, tormented by one of his thousand maladies, wrote in 1829: "To-morrow will be for me a day like the rest. The others will have chariot-races, horse-races, the best in Italy, fireworks which cost untold thousands. . . . I shall see nothing, and I don't like it at all," and indeed, there was cause for lamentation. At Corpus Domini there was the great procession, prepared, expected, looked forward to with longing. On the previous days, long white awnings were erected along the streets where the procession was to pass, and the city already began to assume a festive aspect. Those who lived above the first floors had to make up their minds to see nothing, but those more favoured by fortune hung carpets and tapestries out of their windows and their balconies, and prepared *bombole*, *scartocci*, and *padelle* for the illumination, that is, lamps of paper and of glass, and flat little pans full of tallow, with floating wicks. All this aroused the rapture of the children, whose mouths already watered for the coming sweets and who dreamed at night of the fireworks, the soldiers, and the roaring of the cannon. Finally, the great day arrived, hailed by the pealing of the bells of all the churches. The solemn moment drew near. Here comes the procession; first go the clergy of San Lorenzo and of the Cathedral, the students of the seminaries preceding the higher clergy. Following them comes a battalion of grenadiers. Here are the Court liveries, the nobility in full dress and swords, and all the official world in *grande tenue*. Next

follow the canons of the Cathedral, all sorts of custodians and janitors in gala dress; then the chamberlains, covered with crosses and gold embroidery; then the higher Church dignitaries, with magnificent fur mantles; the members of the Council bearing torches presented by the Court; the ecclesiastics who are Ministers, in splendid vestments; the Court officials bearing tapers; and finally the Canopy, flanked by eight pages, with the precentors in line, without tapers, and eight life-guards with their carbines. The staves of the Canopy are borne by the Knights of St. Stephen, robed in long white mantles with sleeves lined with red, and a purple cross on the left side, or on the breast; and behind the Canopy, His Highness the Grand Duke, with four life-guards carrying carbines, followed by the Grand Chamberlain the "secretary of etiquette," the officers of the palace, and the magistracy. A brigade of mounted guards closes the procession, with the Tuscan soldiers with enormous casques, and the drums in double and triple file, followed by the pipers, directed, guided, tyrannised over by the gigantic drum-major who alternately makes them play their instruments to a deafening extent, and then, by one majestic wave of his ebony baton, stops them short, as though turned into stone. On the afternoon of Saint John's Eve there were chariot-races in the Piazza Santa Maria Novella, which the Court, in State coaches, attended with great pomp, taking their places with the Ministers and foreign envoys

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

A MASQUERADE IN PIAZZA SANTA CROCE.

[*To face page 272.*

in a box prepared for them under the Loggia di S. Paolo, opposite the church. The function opened with a parade of carriages, while the boxes of the amphitheatre erected on the piazza, the windows, the balconies, even the roofs of the houses were crowded with spectators. Then, at the proper hour, the soldiers cleared the piazza and the four Roman chariots made their appearance, each driven by an *auriga* (we will not say a coachman) dressed in antique fashion, one in red, one in yellow, one in blue, and one in green, to match the colour of the chariots. When they had all taken their places, the signal was given, and amid the frantic applause and the anxious attention of the crowd, the chariots drove three times round the course, and the one who first reached the goal had the honour of a triumph, the shouts, the embraces, and the glories of a day. In the evening there were fireworks from the Palazzo Vecchio, and, after 1826, on the Ponte alla Carraja. The city was illuminated, including the Cathedral, the Campanile, and the Baptistry, and there was music in the Piazza del Duomo. On St. John's Day, the Gonfaloniere, with the civil magistrates, proceeded to the Baptistry for the offering of the taper, after which there was High Mass in the Duomo, the Archbishop officiating, and the Court in attendance. In the afternoon *Corso de' barberi* from Porta al Prato to Porta alla Croce, with a rich banner, which had been blessed in the Church of San Giovanni as prize. The Court

witnessed the spectacle from the terrace at the entrance to the Prato, with the horse-guards drawn up in front. The ground was covered by the horses in about seven minutes, and from the top of the Porta alla Croce there were sent off certain puffs of gunpowder to apprize the populace which of the horses had got in first. These signals were repeated from the Cupola of the Duomo. The sovereign, seeing them from his place on the terrace, wrote down the name of the victor on the tablets in his hand and flung them among the crowd. In the evening grand *spettacolo di gala* at the Theatre in Via della Pergola, with grand illumination and free entrance for the people, as well as an open-air *festa* in the gardens of the Teatro Santa Maria on the other side of the Arno (now called the Teatro Goldoni). But let us not forget the salvoes of artillery and of musketry, on the Piazza del Duomo and from the Forte di Belvedere while the Court was present at High Mass. At the order "Present arms!" called out by the mounted officers in command, the fusileers executed the twenty-four prescribed movements; the ramrods gleaming in the sun were drawn quickly from their rests, whirled skilfully around in the active fingers of the soldiers, dropped all together with a great clang into the barrels of the muskets, to be drawn out again, once more whirled rapidly about, and returned to their rests. The muskets were brought to the shoulder, then dropped ringing on the

*Photo*] [*Alinari.*

A SCENE OF THE EPIPHANY.

[*To face page* 274.

ground, raised once more, and from those thousands mouths of fire broke forth the salute with a noise like thunder, while a dense white cloud of smoke enveloped all the scene. The women and children screamed at the report and stopped their ears, and after the echo died away the soldiers were seen once more as immovable as if they had been made of wood. For every salute, twenty-four movements, and three minutes to manœuvre! Just time to get out of reach of the shot.

## III

ALL these amusements and functions, even the cricket-hunting in the Cascine in the early morning of Ascension Day, were participated in by the Court and the fashionable world—who, as Stendahl says, put into practice the art of being happy without stopping to think how difficult it is to attain happiness. The finest people in society, the nobility and the richest citizens were not afraid to spend the greater part of the year in Florence. To the country, to *villeggiare* as they called it, they went only in May and June, returning to the city for Corpus Domini and St. John's Day. In the town, in the old houses and palaces, in the narrow streets, where, in the hottest weather, a cool air issued from the cellars and the dim courts, they feared not the heats of summer nor felt the need of trips to watering-places or to the mountains. The baths were only for such as were seriously ill, and the physicians knew the therapeutic virtues only of the baths of San Giuliano and Montecatini, and sent there only those who were really in need of the cure, and not, as they do now, whole families at a time. After the fair of the SS. Annunziata they went back to the

*Photo]* [*Alinari.*

THE CHARIOT RACE IN THE PIAZZA SANTA MARIA NOVELLA. PICTURE BY GIOVANNI SIGNORINI.

[*To face page 276.*

country, and stayed there until Michaelmas, without other diversions that the usual country drives, the *paretajo* or bird-hunting, and the chase, at the proper times and places. Sometimes there were simple country balls at the time of the vintage and *jeux innocents* like *berlina* or *tibidò*. In town, in the winter, there were *conversazioni*, simple receptions where the company played at quadrille, at whist, at *hombre*, and other games, where there was a little music with pianoforte, *cembalo*, violins, 'celli, and "chamber-singers." Refreshments were handed round, sorbets, syrups, sometimes tea. In the summer these receptions took place in the gardens, and the company partook of iced water-melon. The lady of the house always received in a high dress, as low necks and dress coats were only worn at parties to which one had a written invitation.

Among the most long-established *salons* was that of the Countess of Albany, who lived, as is well known, in the Palazzo Gianfigliazzi on the Lung' Arno. In their latter years, the Countess and her friend, the painter Fabre, had become greatly soured, especially the lady, perhaps because she was annoyed to find that everybody respected her, save only Time. The Countess' Saturdays were very much frequented by foreigners, by diplomats, and by Florentines, who harassed her with bitter epigrams, such as—

> "To the Lung' Arno many strangers go;
> Relics of Alfieri there they find, you know."

One evening, Massimo d'Azeglio went there after the

performance at the Pergola, with the brothers Robilant, then newly arrived in Florence, and heard the Duchess say, turning to Prince Borghese: "À quelle heure viennent ces Messieurs!" D'Azeglio, pulverised by this flash of lightning, drew back and accosted the Count of Castellalfero, Sardinian Minister in Tuscany (who, as it was a gala night, was wearing his grand uniform, covered with gold embroidery, ribbons, crosses, and orders in diamonds), and received Massimo with his usual benevolence. Reassured, D'Azeglio took it into his head to help himself to an ice, one of those especially hard ones, which were then called *mattonelle* (little bricks) and were modelled into the shape of a peach. "I was standing," says D'Azeglio, "just in front of the Count, and while I was vainly striving to make an impression on my ice with the spoon, what does it do but slip off from under it, like a cherry-stone that is snapped? I see it now, bounding against the minister's diamond cross, falling to the floor, and rolling straight to the Countess of Albany's feet. I felt as if I should never leave off running. That was my last visit." When the Countess died, in 1824, her loss was felt less keenly by the greater number of the Florentines and the foreigners than it ought to have been. "Good society, in all countries," observed Gino Capponi, "est un mauvais lieu avoué," and it is thought the proper thing to speak ill of those whose company one frequents the most.

But there was no lack of hospitable houses in

*Photo]* [*Alinari.*

THE FIREWORKS ON THE PONTE ALLA CARRAJA.

[*To face page 278.*

Florence. The Marchesa Clementina Incontri, nata di Prié, a very highly cultivated lady, opened the doors of her palace in Via de' Pucci to the most select society, the Piedmontese visitors especially were to be found there, and all the *letterati*. In Case Incontri, as in Casa Rinuccini, the most learned and most liberal people were best received, because since the time of the French these two families had been the centre of the Italian party of progress, and were partisans of Eugène Beauharnais, dreaming of and working for the special mission of Tuscany in the Italian kingdom. The Marchese Pier Francesco Rinuccini and the Marchese Ludovico Incontri had been always exceedingly well received in the house of the Minister Tassoni, who represented the Viceroy of Italy at the Court of the Queen of Etruria, and afterwards during the French provisional government, and that of the Grand Duchess Elisa Baciocchi. The liberal traditions of the two families were shown also by their family connections, for of the three daughters of Rinuccini one married the Marchese Trivulzio of Milan, one Don Neri Corsini Marchese di Lajatico, and the third an emigrant from the dominions of the Pope, Marchese Azzolino, while one of Gino Capponi's daughters married the son of the Marchese Ludovico Incontri.

In Casa Rinuccini, as well in their palace on the Oltrarno (in Via S. Spirito) and at the Villa alla Torre a Quona, music was much cultivated, and there were some excellent amateur performances. At the little

theatre at Torre a Quona, there once remained, perhaps there still remain, relics of those days in the costumes by means of which the dames and cavaliers of the time transformed themselves into the personages of Goldoni, of Giraud, and of Nota.

At one time the Marchese Pier Francesco Rinuccini set the fashion of picnic *suppers* which took place in summer, when lively companies started off in carriages in the cool starlight nights for some place in the environs of the town. These suppers lasted sometimes nearly until dawn, the palaces remaining closed and silent in the absence of the *padroni*. One night, the Marchese Rinuccini, returning unexpectedly to the palace in town, found no one in the porter's lodge. Ascending the stairs almost in the dark, he entered the house, to find it all illuminated, and to nearly stumble over a servant with a tray of refreshments. "Where are you going? What are you doing?" he cried. The servant stopped short in terror. The Marquis pursued his way, and flinging open the door of the great hall, he beheld a singular sight, couples dancing, who at his appearance seemed to have turned into stone. The footmen, the chambermaids, the woman who had charge of the house-linen (*guarda-roba*), the porters, and the inhabitants of the kitchens and the stables were disporting themselves in the style and fashion of their masters and mistresses, a veritable "high-life below stairs" in the rooms of state. Some of the lady-dancers fainted away. The master had infinite trouble to preserve a grave and stern de-

meanour! But after that night the fancy for those suppers waned in the fashionable circle.

The indulgent good-humour of the patricians never gave way. If the Grand Duke went out to walk with a shawl over his arm, carrying an umbrella, the other gentlemen were no less cordial, expansive and easy going. Even in the most aristocratic houses persons of other classes were received, and on Sundays and Thursdays there was always a place at table for some priest, some artist or literary man, who brought with him the news of the day and stayed for a game of cards in the evening. Expenses were not heavy; the table was abundant but not luxurious, foreign wines came into fashion later, with the *parvenus*, and Tuscan throats were contented with *vermouth*, with *vin santo* and *trebbiano* drawn from the flourishing vineyards as yet untouched by disease, which had been sung by Redi and Carli.

To give something of a picture of Florentine life at that time we quote a few passages from a letter written from Vienna in April, 1822, to the Senator Giovanni degli Alessandri, President of the Academy of Fine Arts, and Director of the Galleries, by Count Angelo Maria D'Elci, a great and wise collector of books, and a bitingly satiric poet. D'Elci, who presented his exceedingly rich collection of rare books to the Laurentian Library, was a ferocious *codino* (reactionary), who hailed with joy the fall of Napoleon and the return of the fatherly rule of the Grand Duke. His epistolary style was decidedly free and easy, and his

letters to Alessandri are a good deal more racy than any of the epigrams which he published. "As to the uniformity of the life which you lead there, believe me that here in Vienna it is exactly the same thing; with this difference, that there everything is done in a small and ugly, and everything here in a gigantic and magnificent style. There you play at cards and you lose at most five pauls a night, here also we play and lose four or five hundred sequins. I am speaking of games of society, *hombre*, whist, &c. When the Neapolitan Ambassador gives dinners, every dinner costs three or four hundred sequins. Whence it comes that the great personages here are gouty and unhealthy, and shorten their lives and render them uncomfortable by over-eating and drinking, and all sorts of other vices. It is just the same, I know, in Florence, but at all events, they don't spend too much. I don't talk of luxury in the way of horses, carriages, liveries, and furniture, nor do I speak of the magnificence of the debts, and of the failures. During the whole of my life in Florence I knew of but one failure, that of Sassi, which did any sort of honour to the country." And he goes on grumbling at those who ruin every form of principle, devour their substance, hinder instruction, subvert the family, and trouble the administration, both public and private. "In my opinion, the universal disease is Epicureanism, and, believe me, idleness, negligence, ignorance, corruption, ambition itself, come of an excessive pursuit of pleasure *per fas et nefas*."

But these reactionary growls, not certainly altogether undeserved, were more applicable to Vienna than to Florence, where the elegant corruption of the great cities found an effectual check in the parsimony of the subjects and of the government of the Grand Duke. I do not say that the asceticism of the Sanfedisti reigned at Florence, but I do say that prodigality of expenditure was almost unknown there. The only amusements were religious holidays, theatres, and receptions. In the palace where, in 1304, the Cardinal of Prato was a guest, and in the gardens whose shady alleys climb the slope of the Costa, a wide hospitality was practised by the Mozzi family, under the rule of the beautiful Countess Teresa. *La Belle Italienne*, as Napoleon called her, admiring her classical beauty, would have deserved an ode from Foscolo, if to the three Graces of Greek mythology had been added a fourth, sacred to pleasure. The society which crowded her rooms, or wandered in the discreet shades of her gardens, was rather mixed and not greatly burdened with etiquette, the temperament of the hostess not being severe.

We must also mention the lordly hospitality of the Marchese Luisa and Margherita Panciatichi, in Via Larga (now Via Cavour) opposite the Palazzo Riccardi. Also the receptions in Casa Tempi, in Via de' Bardi, now Casa Bargagli, where the most elegant and worldly set gathered night after night, and where marriages were arranged, prepared, and rendered more easy by the courteous indulgence of the Marchesa.

Nor must the Orlandini be forgotten, in the palace where, later on, dwelt Jérome Bonaparte, Count de Montfort. But most renowned were the Mondays of another lady, whose *conversazioni* were frequented, in 1812 and 1813, while he was in Florence, by a certain devotee of the fair sex, Ugo Foscolo, who immortalised her in *The Graces*, thus:—

"From an ornate abode by Arno's shore
Which Raphael once his brushes laid aside
To build, that there, in future days, might dwell
So fair a being; issued forth the first,
A lovely mortal, and beside the altar
Her place she takes, while round her beauteous form
The snowy *bisso* flows, and her white fingers
Grow rosy, as they clasp the golden harp
She holds against her breast."

In this palace, at the top of Via San Gallo, not built by Raphael, but begun by Gianfrancesco Sangallo and finished in 1538 by Bastiano d'Aristotile, Eleonora Pandolfini-Nencini, the beautiful harp-player, continued during the Restoration and even later to show herself worthy of the poetic homage and the passion with which she had inspired Ugo Foscolo, and to do the honours of the "ornate abode" with a grace which even her rivals, nay, the Duchess of Albany herself, did not succeed in blackening. In Casa Corsini the invitations were much fewer—the Prince, Don Tommaso, nominated Senator at Rome, entertained much more in that city than in Florence. But between 1817 and 1824 the young ladies of the family, with

their governess, Signora Enriquez, set the example of a new style of reception to their young friends and companions, which proved an agreeable novelty often imitated. After 1821 the tranquil condition of Florence induced many great families to take up their abode there. Don Camillo Borghese, tired of wanderings and emigrations, came, with his brother Francesco, Prince Aldobrandini, and settled down in the present Villino Salviati, in Borgo Pinti. In 1825, in the Villa Zambeccari, now Fabbricotti, after a long and painful illness, died Pauline Bonaparte, another Canovian beauty, with a light, capricious little head and a heart of marble or of flame. Her funeral took place with great pomp, the obsequies being celebrated in the Church of the Badia, whence the corpse was sent on to Rome in a funeral car. Prince Camillo Borghese, her husband, seems not to have been quite broken-hearted, since, a very short time after, he ordered the architect Baccani to build for him, within the space of eighteen months, the palace which now stands in Via Ghibellina, on the site of certain houses which belonged to the Salviati, and which still bears his name. When the palace was finished, with a punctuality bordering on the miraculous, he gave there magnificent fêtes and receptions which were attended by the Court.

Dispossessed princes and kings in exile sought refuge under the protection of Ferdinand III., who made some difficulty in conceding it. The intervention of the Emperor Francis was required,

before Louis Bonaparte, the ex-King of Holland, who had taken the name of Count of Saint Leu, could obtain permission to establish himself at Florence. He first bought from the Capponi delle Rovinate, a villa at Montughi, and afterwards the Gianfigliazzi Palace, where he spent the remainder of his life. At Montughi he confuted Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoleon*, composed romances, which he read aloud to the Countess of Albany, who found them heavy and tiresome, and often neglected to pay his debts. In 1822, a certain Viviani was the ex-king's creditor for the sum of eight hundred *scudi*, for hay and corn for his horses. The Count of Saint Leu proposed to strike a hundred *scudi* off the bill, which Viviani would not consent to; on the contrary, he insisted in a very arrogant manner upon the immediate payment of the debt, without any deduction. The prince, alarmed by the menacing attitude of his creditor, took out his pistols, called for his servants, and Viviani was turned out of the house. In the meantime Viviani's wife, who was waiting for him outside, met in the avenue a boy with blue eyes and an aquiline nose, to whom she roundly abused the Count, being by no means sparing of her epithets regarding a man who had been a king and yet did not pay his debts. "But the Count is my father, madam!" replied the boy who was destined to become the Emperor Napoleon III. The woman was shocked at her mistake, but the day after the debt was paid in full.

After the Count of Saint Leu, two of his brothers

came to Florence: Joseph, who had taken the title of Count de Surviller, and Jerome, who called himself Count de Montfort. Joseph, with Madame Clary and Mademoiselle Zenaide, lived in the Serristori Palace, where he gave sumptuous dinners, but no grand balls or receptions, as Madame Clary was in weak health. He protected the arts, patronised artists, and went every day to the Cascine in a large *calèche* with eight springs, the body and the coach-box being straw-coloured, like all the equipages of the Bonapartes. The Count of Montfort, the youngest of the brothers, had hired the Orlandini Palace, where his two children, Jerome and Matilde, completed their education. King Jerome's green liveries, his fêtes, his adventures, diversified the dulness of Florentine life and were long remembered by everybody. Jules Janin, who was in Florence in 1838, mentions a sumptuous fête given by Jerome, which was attended by the Bourbons of Naples and of Spain and where the honours were done by a young girl *tout blanche et rose*, the Princess Mathilde, who received her guests, not like an exiled princess, but like a charming *parisienne*, forgotten on the banks of the Arno. The Bonapartes were in the habit of meeting in the evenings at the house of Joseph, in the Serristori Palace, and in that palace, given up to the Count de Surviller by the Count Nicholas Demidoff, took place the marriage between the young Mathilde and Anatole Demidoff, to whom the Grand Duke gave the title of Prince of San Donato.

The Demidoffs had been in Florence since 1809. The memory of Count Nicholas, as rich as Crœsus and as benevolent as he was rich, is still held in honour among us. In 1814 he bought the convent of San Donato, turned it, in a very short time, into a magnificent villa, surrounded by a park, adorned with temples and statues in the taste of the day, and full of the rarest plants. Then he gave himself to good works—founded asylums, refuges, free schools, and workshops, and distributed pensions. His brother Paul, also enormously rich, did not resemble him in the least: he led a solitary life, and only at rare intervals gave some grand fête or ball on which he spent thousands. In 1831 he gave a ball for which he had all the reception rooms newly hung with damask, and afterwards had it all taken off and gave it away to the servants, who sold it for 100,000 francs. He could not bear to touch any object, if any one had touched it without gloves. One day he was found by a friend, sedulously intent upon dipping certain bills of the Bank of St. Petersburg into perfumed water contained in a golden chalice. "I am washing these bits of paper," he said, "because they smell horribly."

Another time he invited an English diplomat to breakfast with him, who in a fit of absence of mind, while engaged in conversation, took a lump of sugar out of the sugar-basin with his fingers. The Russian immediately ordered the servant to throw the rest of the sugar out of the window. But the phlegmatic

Englishman was not in the least discomposed. When he had finished his coffee, he flung cup, saucer and spoon out of the window, and turned to his host with a smile: "I did not know before," he said, "of this Russian custom."

With the Demidoffs and the Borgheses, and later on, the Poniatoski, life in the gay world of Florence changed its character. The Court was eclipsed, foreigners flowed into the place from all parts of Europe and in the drawing-rooms there were to be heard all manner of languages. Lamartine, who, in 1829, was *Chargé d'affaires* at Florence, eulogised the Prince, the violets that bloomed in February and the grand fêtes to which he was invited. "Je termine très honorablement mon carnaval par deux grands festins. Sur ce je souhaite le bonsoir à mon cuisinier, et j'entre dans la classes des grands seigneurs du pays, qui mangent, et ne donnent point à manger." "Il fait ici" (it was in December of 1827) "un printemps superbe, ces temps-ci. Mais à peine avons nous le temps d'en jouir, et de sortir: c'est un brouhaha interminable. Il y a toute l'Europe voyageante, et chaque année cela devient plus nombreux en Francais." "Nous voyons beaucoup le prince Borghese. Sa maison est des mille et une nuits; plus encore que celle de M. Demidoff. Enfin c'est un monde et un éclat à en perdre la tête. Il faut s'habiller à dix heures et sortir à onze heures, les bals commencent à minuit." And in February, 1828, he added: "Nous n'avons plus qu'un grand bal à avaler, chez le prince Borghese,

après demain, et un diner diplomatique chez moi dimanche." And in April: "Nous avons ici un grand monde diplomatique, en ce moment, le carnaval a recommencé, et nous ennuie et fatigue. C'est tous les jours un diner, tous les soirs un bal." And in May: "Florence est dans sa beauté physique, car nous avons déjà vingt dégrés de chaleur. Mais elle est dans la solitude et le deuil pour la mort de M. Demidoff, qui y tenait plus d'état qu'une ou deux cours, avec ses dix millions de rente." And in June: "Nous sommes dans une semaine de fêtes jusqu'au cou, des cours de chars, de chevaux, des théatres. Toute la journée en uniforme, et en gala par la ville, et toute la nuit en bals." And in July (there were 28 degrees Reaumur of heat): "Il n'y a pas d'amitié, pas de verve, pas de zèle qui résiste à vingt huit dégrés: l'amour seul est à cette température et veritablement c'est son règne à Florence. Les nuits sont divines. Je les passes à errer en calèche dans les rues, ou sous les pins harmonieux des Cascines environné des beautés seduisantes qui disent *ohimè* et à qui je ne dis rien."

* * * * *

But, we will pause a moment to observe these lovely creatures, who say *ohimè* and seek in the cool of the evening relief from the suffocating heat, perhaps also from the ardour of passion. No longer were rosy and lively visages the fashion, no longer were coral lips the theme of song. Times were changed, as far back as 1824 Guadagnoli says:

"A red face only suits a country inn,
Nor such the features courtly hearts to win."

Women had become pallid, languid, sentimental. The anemia of romanticism, the subtle poison of passion, had penetrated into their blood, and there reigned a new, mysterious, intimate ardour, hitherto unknown. Formerly when the *Gazzetta di Firenze* announced on the fourth page, the *Pleasing and Instructive Library*, published by Guglielmo Piatti, which contained *The History of Four Spaniards* in eleven volumes, *The Misfortunes of the Family of Ortenberg* in six volumes, the *Cemetery of the Magdalen* in eight volumes, and other agreeable novelties of the same description, the ladies did not spend their nights in perusing them, and to the cut-and-dried romance of novels they preferred that which they constructed for themselves; to sentiment they preferred reality, for even if it proved rather vulgar and prosaic, it was breathing and alive. All through the Napoleonic period, life, art and literature was the apotheosis of force, vigour and outward form. Painting, sculpture and fashion idealised material beauty; and the breath of neo-helenism which was in the air covered with a veil of spuriously antique art that sensualism which the seventeenth century had powdered and frizzed into the costume of gallantry. On the disappearance of the hero ("the hero of the scamps," D'Elci called him) the sensualism remained. There was war no longer. No longer did those cruel butcheries of young flesh leave awful gaps in the

family and in the census. There succeeded a certain joy in living, a sense of freedom as if from a dolorous incubus, and the longing for pleasure, the Epicureism of D'Elci, got the upper hand. At the Congress of Vienna people began to dance and to amuse themselves, while all Europe awaited the fiat which should settle her destinies. But could it arrest that maddening impulse? Then came the restorations, and religion little by little reassured her former sway. Laws and edicts strove to drive the new generations, after so many years of Jacobinism and militarism, into the old paths. But weak indeed were the preachings of the "President of Good Government" and the powers of the Grand Duke against the torrent! "The world goes on by itself," repeated the Count Fossombroni with his sarcastic sneer, and the reports of the police showed him which way it was going. For the paternal Government of Ferdinand III. and of Leopold II. was always very careful to know what was going on in the families, in the palaces of the nobles and the houses of the citizens. Anonymous denunciations abounded. Emissaries were set in motion, votes were taken, papers written out, the culprits were summoned to the Palazzo Non Finito (in Via del Proconsolo) or to the Commissary's office, and there were severe admonitions, threats of expulsion for foreigners and threats of imprisonment in convents and spiritual exercises for the natives of the country. People listened, let the storm go by, and went on as before—if not worse. The example, we must acknowledge, came from the

higher classes; not from the Court, however. The Vicars, the Chamberlains, the Magistrates and Governors were often subjected to inquisition, and their domestic infelicities were the object of inquiries and investigation for the Ministers, nay, for the Grand Duke himself. Whoever takes the trouble to read the ponderous files of the "Presidency of Good Government" will find many curious particulars. At that time the eye of the police was like the eye of God, it was everywhere, it saw through walls and ceilings, into elegant drawing-rooms and discreet boudoirs, and the benevolent shepherd of this Tuscan flock was obliged to acknowledge to himself that there were among them many wandering sheep.

But in a happy hour came the foreigners to Florence, the torrent of sentimental romances ceased and the image of love in fiction began to take another aspect. Mysticism and spiritualism came like a salutary balm to calm the irregular ardours formerly in vogue. The study of the loves of others dispelled the desire of realising it in fact, or at least covered it with a mist of ideality. And fashion aided in the work of reform. The classic garments clinging to the form were no longer worn. The Revolution, with savage impetus, had swept away the *guardinfante*, the *paniers*, the stiff bodices lined with buckram which compressed the figure. During the Empire the restoration of the corset was out of the question, as Madame de Longueville and the Empress, whose figures were

stumpy and short-waisted, opposed it with the utmost determination. Later on, after 1820 and triumphantly in 1821, it reappeared with its whalebones, its lacings, and its steel springs, with consummate art compressing the exuberant, sustaining the weak, and hiding the deficiencies of natute. The jewel returned to its case, and with more uniformity in appearance susceptible hearts were less easily touched.

## IV

BUT, unobserved by the light and frivolous crowd, in the midst of this whirl of mundane gallantry, there lived in Florence grave and serious men, convinced of the task which awaited Italy after the Napoleonic downfall; by their writings, by their work, in a compact group, with ears ready to catch the first whisper of liberty, they prepared the new day of liberal institutions. They did not disdain to mingle with the giddy throng; far from it, they hid their secret aspirations under the mask of the most careless frivolity. Florence had the privilege at that period of containing within her walls, among others, Gino Capponi, Cosimo Ridolfi and Pier Francesco Rinuccini.

As minerals have the virtue of crystallising into a determinate form, so it is with certain ideal figures in history. To those of us who admired him in in his old age, blind and venerable, Gino Capponi seemed as if crystallised into that grave and austere post. The *candido Gino* of the Leopardian ode caused many to suppose him old beyond his years. But such he was not always; and it is pleasant to

evoke the image of the youthful nobleman, learned, industrious and intelligent, who from his early years had given proof of culture not usual among the Marchesi of that day, or of any day—knowing Latin, Greek, French, English and German, and studying mathematics with real passion. He became a widower at twenty-two, with two little girls who were under the charge of his mother, the Marchesa Maddalena, a most pious woman; he was thus able to devote his whole life to letters, travelling through Italy, studying her monuments and her masterpieces of art, and the life of the Court to which he was called by the benevolence of Ferdinand III. did not weaken his character. A voyage to France and to England, whence he returned by the way of Belgium, Holland, Germany and Switzerland, was really the beginning of his moral manliness. He there acquired ideas which, in a country where, as Fossombroni says, things were done after the fashion of a low tavern (*da vinai*) might seem tainted with extravagant liberalism. England, Scotland and Ireland, with their national institutions, seemed to him most admirable countries. He made the acquaintance of illustrious persons, made friends with the Italian exiles, among them Ugo Foscolo, cherishing a dream of cultivating closer relations with them for the purpose of founding a journal. He was introduced into noble and hospitable houses; obtained precious information about schools, education and teaching; admired the horse-races, frequented booksellers' and tailors' shops,

picking up various editions of the *Decameron* for the Abbé Masini; executed commissions for his friends who wanted snuff-boxes and cambric; filled his head with all sorts of information concerning politics, literature and history, and his trunks with all sorts of things—things which were, as he said, the most fashionable—and returned home after his peregrinations, regretting the idea that he must fall once more into the claws of the Austrians and the priests, with a mass of ordinary people worthy of no better fate. The effects of this journey were seen in the pains which he took in the founding of the Lancastrian schools and the system of mutual instruction, together with Ridolfi, and the institution of a College for girls of good family, which afterwards became, under the patronage of the Archduchess, the present College of the SS. Annunziata (now at Poggio Imperiale). The soft white hands of the English girls, which he greatly admired, inspired him with pity for the thin yellow hands of the daughters of Italy, condemned by their *codina* education to spend their time in useless needlework, in making paper flowers and imitations of fruit in wool, and in embroidering slippers and smoking caps for their papas. Meantime another design, that of founding a newspaper, which had occurred to him during his travels, while he sat gazing up dreamily on the tops of the diligences, had found a propitious occasion for its execution. In July, 1819, there came to Florence a young man from Geneva,

a native of Oneglia, who, after having travelled through Europe and Africa on business for his father and in Finland on his own account, seeing and observing many things, opened in Florence, in 1820, on the first two floors of the Buondelmonti Palace on the Piazza Santa Trinità, a "Library and Reading Room" (*Gabinetto Letterario*), where met together by common consent the best minds of Italy. Jean Pierre Vieusseux united to the industry of a merchant, the intelligence of a journalist, the instinct, the moderation, the audacity of an editor of genius. Capponi, as soon as he met the man, left the whole business to Signor Pietro, as he used to call him with affectionate familiarity. Thus, to the *Saggiatore*, which only lasted a short time, succeeded the *Antologia*, of which Capponi's was the guiding mind, because the name of Signor Gino, as Collini used to write it, conciliated many who were his friends. But on the *genius loci* of the *Gabinetto* and of the *Antologia*, which had the honour of re-awakening the devotion to national literature, and offending Austria, and thus causing an annoyance to the Grand Duke which later on led to its suppression, we cannot dwell to the length that the subject deserves. It is enough to refer to Vieusseux's receptions held weekly in the evening and preceded by a modest dinner, to which were invited some of the most assiduous attendants of the receptions, Niccolini, Montani, Colletta, Pepe, Tommaseo, Giordani, and Mario Pieri, that devout

flatterer of himself, who chronicled these reunions in a manuscript journal, by which he is far better known than by all his works in prose, and—Heaven save the mark !—in verse !

The Library was a dangerous centre of liberal propaganda. The newspapers and periodicals which came to it from abroad, the books and pamphlets were the cause of great vigilance on the part of the police. In a confidential report of the 30th of July, 1822, there is an account of an engraving seen at Vieusseux's, representing all the principal sovereigns of Europe standing close together, with a pedestal on their heads on which was a statue of the Constitution. The proprietor of the engraving was, naturally, the Marchese Gino Capponi, "who," according to the report, "has often caused to be found in that library articles of a similar nature which reach him from abroad by secret ways."

The literary society of Florence as well as the political liberals looked upon Capponi as their head and the Library as their centre. Vieusseux was considered as a ferocious liberal, astute and independent, and was suspected of holding communication with the most dangerous revolutionists ; but no one could ever catch him in the act, nor did the Government ever dare to "penetrate into the recesses of the Library," nor to molest Capponi. Ferdinand III., who from his exile at Salzburg had written to the Marchese Capponi, Gino's father : "While I have life, I shall be Italian," would never consent to the rigorous

*régime* counselled by Austria, and when Salvotti scolded fiercely from Milan, insisting that Gino Capponi should be ordered to give up certain correspondence which had passed between him and Federico Confalonieri, the Grand Duke answered that he never imposed such offices upon the gentlemen of his household. Thus, between worldly amusements and the study of Greek, the Marchese was preparing himself to become to his country what poor Frederic Confalonieri would fain have been for his. Capponi bore his name, his fame, the admiration and esteem of all with the same ease with which he wore the most carefully selected costumes made after the latest London fashion. He listened quietly to the gossip of the gay world, but never deigned to repeat it, even to his most intimate friends. In 1821 when the Count Giraud had already begun to air his satirical talents in Florentine drawing-rooms, Capponi wrote to Velo: "There is a recent epigram of his which you might be curious to see, but I will never be the one to tell it you, because the argument is one of those with which I do not choose to meddle." From the meditative idleness of Varramista he returned to fashionable life, sometimes to those mad bursts of dissipation which occasionally took possession of him, but which, as he himself said, were not innate vices of his character. To the Marchese Pucci, who often visited London, he used to give commissions, ordering from Stulz the tailor, coats and white piqué vests, and from another tailor, William, pantaloons of blue

cloth and of *roshendock.* He sent for the finest undershirts, for white cravats, silk pocket-handkerchiefs of the latest fashion, and boxes of Scotch snuff, of which some was for ladies. Then he wanted little machines for sharpening pencils, and razors, but sent besides for classical books, the works of Lord Byron, and important volumes of history. To him, an open-handed and liberal gentleman, his friends had recourse whenever they wished to set on foot any new undertaking, and for every work of mercy, and found him always ready to spend both money and trouble. To Guglielmo Libri, a man of powerful mind, but led away by a stormy youth, he gave admonition, counsel and assistance. Pietro Colletta, who returned to Florence almost disabled by the cold of Moscow, whither he had been sent, found quiet and leisure for study in a small Villa at La Pietra; and there Colletta wrote the larger portion of his history. To correct the pages of this friend, who was said to have a heart as big as the Cupola of the Duomo and to put it all into his writings, there gathered around him Capponi, Giuliano Frullani, the engineer, a man of high cultivation, Vieusseux, Montani, Giacomo Leopardi, Giordani, Niccolini and Francesco Forti. Colletta was very glad of these corrections and once got quite angry with Leopardi, who in several pages of history only changed a "to" into "in" and an "in order that" into "so that." There were hot discussions, in which Niccolini grew heated and Giordani angry.

Mario Pieri, the faithful Pylades of this literary group, so greatly his superiors, was always quarrelling with somebody, even with Niccolini, whom he believed to be jealous of a prize given to him (Pieri) by the Accademia della Crusca, but with whom he became reconciled and returned to the lunches, which consisted in summer and autumn of a plate of figs only.

Tuscan literary society counted also more than one Egeria; the foremost of these being the Marchesa Carlotta de' Medici-Lenzoni, in whose house Giordani met that most beautiful girl of fourteen, consumed by incurable melancholy, whom he celebrated in one of his most successful prose works, *The Psyche of Tenerani*. In the house of this highly educated woman, which stood beside the burial-place of Boccaccio at Certaldo, he had met Niccolini, besides Madame Rosellini, a writer of poems now forgotten, and many artists and musicians who in travelling passed through Florence. And in the house of the sisters Certellini in Via Vigna Nuova, the house which stands next to the Loggia de' Rucellai, foregather the most intimate friends and most faithful admirers of Niccolini, who was a guest and almost master in the house in his later years.

But when the *salon* of the Duchess of Albany was closed there was no literary *salon*, properly so called, left in Florence. The flower of serious and cultivated society went to Vieusseux, and did not omit to visit the Marchese Capponi. A celebrity in the world of

letters sometimes came to Vieusseux, and the reception assumed a sort of solemn character, as when Alessandro Manzoni with his wife and six children came to Florence. Fauriel, Sismondi, Casimir de la Vigne also came and were received and fêted, as well as Savigny, Bartolommeo Borghesi, Champollion, the Dantophil Witte, the Earl of Guilford, and many more. For Florence at that time was a place of artistic pilgrimage, and a secure and quiet refuge for great and meditative minds. Lord Byron came in 1817 to visit the galleries, whence he issued, as he has written, "dazzled and drunk with beauty." Shelley remained there some months, and composed there in 1819 the last act of his *Prometheus Unbound*. In the Medicean *Venus*, in the *Niobe*, and in the pictures (brought triumphantly back among us from France three years before by the Senator Alessandri and the painter Benvenuti) he sought the spirit of form. But he was unable to remain long, as the cold winds and the water disagreed with him. But in the Cascine, where he was wont to take solitary walks, he wrote the *Ode to the West Wind*, one of his most perfect poems; and in the Gallery he conceived the fragment to the *Medusa of Leonardo*, where he strove to express the influence of art upon poetry. Samuel Rogers passed whole mornings in the Tribune, contemplating the *Venus*, I know not whether striving to call her into life or to inspire himself by beholding her. Walter Savage Landor, who came to Florence in 1821, spent the rest of his life there, living first in the

Palazzo Medici and then in his Villa at Fiesole (now belonging to Professor Fiske), where he gathered all the English who came to Florence admiring the author of the *Imaginary Conversations*, in which elegant prose he has succeeded in combining art and erudition, the ancient and the modern world, infusing life into both. Brusque and eccentric, he permitted no liberties, and on the order of expulsion being brought to him by a policeman of low class, incited by a servant whom he turned out of his house for theft, he appealed to the Grand Duke, who decided in his favour. Of Florentine society he was no great lover, but an excellent judge, and wrote about it with great freedom to the English periodicals, narrating all its small meannesses, among others the story of a gentleman who sold his wife's wardrobe when the breath was hardly out of her body. He quarrelled with the Marchese Medici, and wrote to him complaining that he had enticed away his coachman. Medici having called on him, perhaps to excuse himself, entered the room where Mrs. Landor was sitting with his hat on; Landor, entering, took the hat off his head and, taking him by the arm, marched him out of the house, sending him afterwards, by the hands of a policeman, a formal notice that he was leaving his house (*disdetta*).

## V

BUT as space warns us to conclude, we must go back to politics, and mention a few memorable events which occurred between 1817 and 1831.

On September 30, 1817, under the majestic vault of Santa Maria del Fiore, Monsignor Morali celebrated the nuptials of Carlo Alberto of Savoy-Carignan with Maria Teresa di Toscana, a young girl of sixteen, very pious, and adorned with all the most exquisite gifts which become a princess. There was the usual cannonading, the usual crowd in the streets, two lines of soldiers from the Duomo to the Pitti Palace, *pranzo di gala* at Court, drives at the Cascine in *grand tenue* and fireworks from the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio. On the 6th of October the young couple left for Turin, accompanied as far as Covigliajo in the Appennines by the Grand Duke and the Archduke Leopold and his sister. On the 16th of November there was another marriage, in the SS. Annunziata; Leopold, Hereditary Grand Prince of Tuscany, married the Princess Maria Anna Carolina of Saxony. More *festas*, more cannonades, more fireworks; Court balls and dinners, and balls at the theatres. But the marriage

was childless, and in order to prevent Tuscany from falling under the dominion of Austria, Ferdinand III, who had passed his fiftieth year, was induced, on May 6, 1821, to espouse the Princess Maria Ferdinanda of Saxony, sister to his daughter-in-law. On April 2, 1821, at three o'clock in the morning, there descended at the Schneiderff's Hotel, Lung' Arno Guicciardini (now Pension Barbensi), His Highness the Prince of Carignan, under the name of Count de Barge. At eight o'clock he sent his aide-de-camp to the Pitti Palace to give notice of his arrival to the Grand Duke, and going at nine o'clock in person to visit him, remained more than an hour in conversation with his father-in-law, and stayed to dinner with him without any etiquette or formality. Forced to become the guest of the Grand Duke he was soon afterwards joined by the Princess Maria Teresa, who between Nice and Leghorn ran the risk of shipwreck with her son. Carlo Alberto carried about the streets of Florence his grave, mournful countenance, which the people, used to jovial faces, looked upon with wonder. He had to go about here and there with the Court, to Siena to be present at tiresome and interminable processions; to Prato for a horrid horse-race, following the Grand Duke, who, rejuvenated by his second marriage, went about in a straw hat and gaiters, visiting his estates on foot and looking after the forage and the grain like any other good proprietor. A portion of the summer was passed at Poggio Imperiale, whence the Grand Duke came down to the city on foot; in the evening there

was the drive in the Cascine, greatly frequented by foreigners, and the theatre when there was no reception at Court. The Prince of Carignan, humiliated, unpopular, shutting up in his own heart the true secret of his conduct, passed from deep depression to all forms of worldly amusement, with his good-natured and faithful aide-de-camp, his Sancho Panza, Silvano Costa, whose devotion rescued him from many a scrape. On September 16, 1822, there happened at the Villa at Poggio Imperiale an incident which just missed depriving Italy of her future liberator. The nurse of the little prince of Carignan, trying to kill mosquitoes with a lighted taper, set fire to the curtains of the bed in which lay Victor Emmanuel, and seeing the flames, in order to save the boy who had only a few unimportant burns, she received such terrible wounds, as nearly caused her death. The Princess Maria Teresa, who soon afterwards gave birth to Prince Ferdinand, afterwards the Duke of Genoa, had to be bled to avert the ill effects of the fright she had received.

On June 18, 1824, after five days' illness, while the whole population of Florence trembled for the safety of their prince, the Grand Duke Ferdinand III. died. His death was looked upon as a public disaster. People wept in the streets, and those were honest tears, spontaneous and sincere. The exiles, too, wept, for they recognised the virtues of the good and liberal and tolerant sovereign whose indulgence they had experienced. Landor, in one of his *Imaginary Conversations*, gives an excellent portrait of the

Grand Duke, and cites his last words to his son Leopold. "Take care of my wife, of your sister, and of my people." And then, after a pause: "In these circumstances, the theatres are always closed for a long space of time, but many people who earn their bread in that way, suffer from this. Shorten the Court mourning."

A few hours after the remains of the good prince had been laid to rest in the cold vaults of San Lorenzo, whilst the Hereditary Prince and the Grand Duchesses had gone to hide their grief in the Villa at Castello, the Count of Bombelles, the Austrian Minister, presented himself at Court, asking for the Archduke Leopold and saying that he had instructions for him from Vienna. Fossombroni, guessing at the trick, hastened to receive him in his quality of Secretary of State of the new sovereign, whose succession to the throne Bombelles wished to impede; and on June 19th an edict was published, announcing the death of Ferdinand III. and the succession of the new Grand Duke, Leopold II.

He immediately lowered the predial taxes by a third, revoked those upon the slaughter-houses, which had been in force since the Republic, completed the new surveys, continued the work of drainage in the Maremma, and set an almost ostentatious example of economy. The bottle of Burgundy opened at dinner on one day returned for several more, until it was empty. The princesses dressed with simplicity, and the life at Court was very simple. The paternal

THE GRAND DUKE LEOPOLD II.

[*To face page* 308.

policy of Ferdinand's government was still maintained ; the exiles were tolerated ; if, threatened with expulsion, they alleged a plausible excuse, they were left unmolested. Some may recall the famous duel between Pepe and Lamartine, which the police did not only entirely fail to prevent, but heard of only when it was over. And Pepe remained at Florence, looked upon almost with favour by the government. The occasion of the duel had been the well-known dispute concerning the line in Dante :

> " Poscia più che il dolor potè il digiuno,"
> (And famine did what sorrow could not do)

the advocate Carmignani maintaining that the Count Ugolino had devoured his children. And in Florence at that time there went about the following epigram :

> " To eat his children dead that man may come
> Through hunger, strikes a lawyer with no wonder,
> For he devours, when he has brought them under,
> Not children only ; father, mother, home."

The censure and the " Good Government " strove in vain against the general spirit of epigram that pervaded Florence later on, when to Giuseppe Giusti's verse, Giraud gave its first inspiration to satire. Among the papers of the censor, P. Mauro Bernardini, there exists a collection of epigrams of which the author seems to have been a certain Gherardo Ruggieri ; and some may be found there

which, some time after 1826, were put forward by others as their own.

> "To Seraphin the painter a good priest
> Upon his deathbed brought the sacrament,
> And said 'See, Serafino, how the Lord
> Comes, as He came into Jerusalem,'
> The dying man in failing accents answered:
> 'Yes, I can tell that by the steed that bears Him.'"

In Tuscany, the liberal opposition, having no other method of making itself heard, spoke out in verse, when it could not succeed in compromising the sovereign by some carefully contrived expedient. In 1830, when Leopold II. was to return from Vienna, where it was feared that he had yielded to the suggestions of Austria, it seemed a good opportunity to Cosimo Ridolfi, Capponi and Rinuccini to accord him an affectionate and festive reception, celebrating the occasion by an inscription to be carved upon a marble column, to be erected three miles outside of Porta San Gallo on the Bologna road. The inscription, by Pietro Giordani, was prepared and approved, and permission accorded to collect public subscriptions for the occasion. When, suddenly, the permission was revoked and all manifestations prohibited, Ridolfi, Capponi and Rinuccini resigned their offices of Chamberlains and of Director of the Mint. The day after their resignations had been accepted, Giuseppe Poerio and Pietro Giordani, who had lived for many years in Florence, received peremptory orders to depart. A similar order was

also given to General Colletta, who was accorded a delay in consequence of the state of his health. The police, then under the direction of Ciantelli and instructed by the Sanfedisti, suspicious of revolutionary movements, such as had broken out here and there since the change of affairs in France, began to give trouble, and looked with a jaundiced eye even upon the monument to Dante Alighieri, which was erected in 1830 in the Church of Santa Croce. The Prince had no one to give him sincere advice, which would have been a counterpoise to the power of Ciantelli. The risings in Bologna and Modena, in February, 1831, and those in the Roman States, the insurrections which surrounded Tuscany on every side, required precautions, and protection against similar acts. The more ardent among the liberals were much excited; it seemed just the moment to constrain the Prince to grant a Constitution. Guglielmo Libri, on his return from Paris, where he had been deeply implicated in the movement of July, went in January, 1831, to Gino Capponi to induce him to look with favour on the conspiracy in progress.

On the evening of Berlingaccio (the last Thursday in Carnival) while the Grand Duke, as usual, was walking about in the pit of the Pergola Theatre, the conspirators were to surround him, take possession of his person, and carry him off to a place of security, where he would be forced to sign all kinds of documents. But Capponi wisely opposed this

plan, considering it too risky, and, in case of failure, sufficient to drive the Prince into the arms of Austria. And the conspiracy, although it was attempted, failed. The Grand Duke, on February 10, 1831, went, as usual, to the Pergola, and, after half-past ten, went down into the pit, where he remained until after midnight. The police watched over him. Libri and his fellow-conspirators did not appear, but close beside the Grand Duke, with a short dagger hidden in his sleeve, there went a certain Marco Ciatti, custodian of the Riccardian Library, a robust and resolute man, determined to dispose of the first that moved.

He was the sole conspirator!

# NOTE

THESE five essays on Florentine life and manners at different periods have been translated from the Italian, and now appear together in book form for the first time. Two, however, have already seen the light in English print, *A Florentine Merchant* as a magazine article, and *The Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines* independently. A large number of the illustrations have never been published before, and some have been obtained from private collections.

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# INDEX


Adimari, Fiammetta, 133
Adimari-Ricasoli wedding, 126
Adimari Tower, 267
Adventurers, 123
Advices for family life, 66, 67
Alarms, 91
Albany, Countess of, 277, 278, 284, 286, 302
Alberti, Leon Battista, 127
Albizi, Francesca, 109
Aldobrandini, Silvestro, 254
Alessandri, Giovanni degli, 281
Alighieri, *see* Dante
Alliances, 97
Almsgiving, 61
America discovered, 140
Amerighi, Amerigo, 110, 111
Anecdotes, 51
Angiolieri, Cecco, 47
Antinori, Amerigo, 254
*Antologia*, The, and its contributors, 298
Archivio della Grascia, 112
Aretino, Pietro, 145, 148, 150, 201, 205
Arnoldi, Alberto, 103
Arragon, Cardinal of, 155, 156, 157
Arragon, Tullia of, 144, 146, 148, 155, 158, 159, 160, 164, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 190, 191, 195, 198, 199, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250
Arrighi, Alessandro, 196, 223
Arrighi, Benedetto, 196
Artists' jokes, 93
Aspasia, 147
Austrian restoration, 258

Baciocchi, Elisa and Felice, 259, 279
Baglioni, Ridolfo, 196
Bagnoli, Pietro, 256
Baldovinetti's memoranda, 100
Bandello, Matteo, 149
Baptisms, 36
Baptistery, The, 18, 24
Bartolommei, Girolamo, 255
Beauharnais, Eugène, 279
Bells, 23
Benedetti, Francesco, 256
Bentivoglio, Ercole, 196
Benucci, Lattanzio, 195, 196, 221
Bernardini, Mauro, 309
Bernardino, Fra, of Siena, 114
Berti, Bellincione, his wife, 41
*Biadajolo's* miniatures, 17, 86
Bigallo frescoes, 17
*Biscaca*, a game, 43
Bishop's Palace, The, 24
Bombelles, Count, 308
Bonaparte, Jerome, 284
Bonaparte, Joseph, 287
Bonaparte, Louis, 286
Bonaparte, Matilde, 287
Bonaparte, Pauline, 285
Boncompagno, 42
Bonvicino, Alessandro, 143, 144, 247
Borbone, Ludovico di, 258
Borghese, Cammillo, 285
Borghesi, Bartolommeo, 303
Borghini, Vincenzo, 17
Botticelli's *Assumption*, 87

Boundary, First, of Florence, 17
Bridges of Florence, 19, 21
Broccardo, 203
Bruno di Giovanni, 93
Brunellesco, Filippo, 93
Brunelleschi, Salvestro, 106
Bufalo, Angelo dal, 149
Buonaccorso di Piero, 50, 117, 118
Buondelmonti, Valore, 105
Byron, Lord, 303

Cacciaguida's praise of ancient customs, 33
Calabria, Duke of, 107
Calandrino, 93
Calimala, 46
Calzaioli, Via, 267
Campana, Domenico, 150
Campana, Giulia, 146, 151, 155, 156, 157, 244
Campanile, The, 17
Capponi, Gino, 266, 278, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 310, 311
Carmignani, Giovanni, 309
Castiglionchio, Messer Lapo da, 89
Castiglione, Baldassarre, 161
Caterina di San Celso, 148, 150
Cattaneo, Simonetta, 135
"Cavazza's Will," 74, 75, 76
Cennini's fresco, 86
Censorship, 309
Census of Rome under Leo X., 150, 151
Certellini, Sisters, 302
Challenge, A, for Tullia, 165
Champollion, J. F., 303
Chariot races, 257, 273
Chiocca, Messer Pietro, 249
*Chronicles of Nüremberg*, 87
Ciantelli, chief of the police, 311
Ciatti, Marco, 312
Cibo, Francesco, 136, 137
Clary, Madame, 287
Clelio, Tullia's son, 249, 250
College of the SS. Annunziata, 297
Colletta, Pietro, 298, 301, 311
Colonna, Vittoria, 169, 171, 177
Commune, The, and its citizens, 63
Confalonieri, Federico, 300
Confessions of a peasant, 28
Contrast between morality and practice, 95, 96
Corilla Olimpica, 258
Corn-market, 85
Corset and its restoration, 293, 294
Corsi, Tommaso, 254
Corsini, Neri, 263
Corsini, Prince Tommaso, 284
Cosimo I., Duke of Florence, 214, 235, 237
Cosmetics and wigs, 42
Costa, Silvano, 307
Courtesans in Rome, 152, 153
Courtesans of the Cinquecento, 148
Crasso, Francesco, 196, 214
Cristofano di Fuccio, 57
Cristofora, Tullia's servant, 247
Cuppano of Montefalco, 196

Dangers in ancient life, 63
Dante, 37
Dante's ballad, 45
Dante's censures of the social life, 34
Dante's monument in Santa Croce, 311
Dati, Gregorio, 120
Datini, Francesco, 102, 116, 122
Davanzati, Chiaro, 16
Defects of Florentine tongue, 50
De la Vigne, Casimir, 303
D'Elci, Count Angelo Maria, 281
Delminio, Giulio Camillo, 196
Demidoff, Anatole, 287
Demidoff family, 288, 289
De Sanctis, Francesco, 264
Diotima, 147
Domenichi, Lodovico, 155, 160, 161
Domenico di Michelino's painting, 87
Domestic life, 39
Donatello, 93
Donati, Gemma, 37
Donna Filippa, 42
Donna Gemma, 42
Dowries, 36, 37
Dupont, General, 258
Dwellings of the people, 89

Enlargement of Florence, 20
Entering Florence, 22
Entry of Ferdinand III. in Florence, 253, 254, 255, 256
Envy, 61
Epicureanism, 282, 292
Este, d', Isabella, 170, 172
Etruria, King of, 258
Expenses, 73
Extension of the Commune, 33
External history of Florence, 51

Fashions, 43, 104, 105, 106
Fasting, 61
Fat Carpenter, 93
Father's authority, 98
Fauriel, Charles, 303
Feasts and festivals, 270, 271
Ferdinand III., 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 260, 262, 263, 265, 266, 281, 292, 299, 306, 307
Fiacres, public vehicles, 269
Filarete, Francesco, 138
Fiquelmont, Count of, 263
Fire prevention, 63
Fires in Florence, 25, 89, 90
Fireworks, 257
Floods of the Arno, 25
Florence at the time of Ferdinand III., 267, 268, 269
Florentine contemporaries of Cacciaguida, 32
Folgore of San Geminiano, 45
Food, 39
Foreign officials in Florence, 109
Foscolo, Ugo, 284, 296
Fossombroni, Vittorio, 262, 264, 1265, 292, 308
Fracastoro, Girolamo, 196
Frangipane, Messer Mario, 250
Fresco, A, in the upper cloisters of Santa Croce, 86
Frullani, Emilio, 267
Frullani, Leonardo, 263
Funerals, 37, 38, 115
Furniture, 39

Gaddi, Taddeo, 103
Gamblers in the fresco of Lecceto, 91
Gambling, 43
Garzia, Don, 236
Gates of Florence, 19, 20, 21
Gaultier, General, 257
Gioggi, Bartolo, 93
Giordani, Pietro, 298, 301, 310
Giovenale, Latino, 196
Giraffe, The, of the Sultan, 139
Giraldi, Giovanni Battista, 173, 206, 207, 208, 209
Giraud, Count Giovanni, 300, 309
Girl's life, 67
Gondi, Guglielmo, his palace, 139
Gossips in ancient Florence, 25
Grandinelli, Ser Virgilio, 247, 248
*Grasso legnaiolo, see* Fat Carpenter, 93
Grazia, Niccolò, 167, 201, 204
Grazzini, Antonio, surnamed *Lasca*, 230
Guerriera, Countess, 44
*Guerrin Meschino*, by Tullia, 199, 243
Guicciardi, Silvestro dei, 211, 213
Guicciardini, Luigi, 114
Guilford, Earl of, 303

*Hetaeræ*, 147, 245
Hospital of St. John the Evangelist, 24
House doors, 64
Husbands, 39
Hygienic warnings, 66

Illegitimate children, 41
Illuminations, 257
Imperia, a courtesan, 148
Incontri, Clementina, 279
Incredulity, 92, 93
Individualism, 119
Influence of Greco-Roman antiquity, 147
Inns and taverns, 46
Italian colonies abroad, 46
Italian names and surnames, 49

Jesters, 44
Jests and stories, 26

Journals in Florence, 260
Journeys, 46
Lamartine, Alphonse, 289, 290, 309
Lamb, the sign of the wool trade, 47
Lamps in the streets, 259
Landor, Walter Savage, 303, 307
Landscape, Florentine, 16
Lasca, *see* Grazzini, Antonio, 230
Lawsuits, 73
Lechi, Lieutenant-General, 259
Leopardi, Giacomo, 301
Leopold II., 257, 305, 308, 310
Libri, Guglielmo, 301, 311
Life, daily, in the fourteenth century, 64
Life like a cask of wine, 62
Loan banks, 48
Loggie, 93
Longueville, de, Madame, 293
Lord of Love, 45
Love of luxury, 41
Lucarini, Ser Lattanzio, 212
Luneville, Treaty of, 263

Macinghi, Alessandra, 101, 124, 125
Mannelli, Piero, 196, 225, 226, 227, 229
Manners and customs of the first citizens, 33
Manni Ugolini, Sigismondo, 211
Manzoni, Alessandro, 303
Maria Anna Carolina of Saxony, her marriage, 305
Maria Ferdinanda of Saxony, her marriage, 306
Maria Louisa, 258
Maria Theresa, her marriage, 305, 306
Maria Theresa and Louisa, Archduchesses, 257
Marriages, 36, 37
Martelli, Ludovico, 196
Martelli, Nicolò, 196, 215
Martelli, Ugolino, 196, 223
Mazzei, Ser Lapo, 102, 120, 123, 135
Meals, 39
Medicean Carnival, 137, 138
Medici, de', Cardinal Ippolito, 196
Medici, Clarice, 163
Medici, Lorenzo, 135, 136, 137, 140
Medici, Lorenzo, marries Clarice Orsini, 132
Medici, Piero, his infantine letters, 133, 134, 135
Medici-Lenzoni, Carlotta, 302
Medici, Marchese, 304
Menou, Baron, General, 258
Mercato, Vecchio, 24, 90, 91
Merchants become bankers, 124
Merchants of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, 55
Merimée, Prosper, 51
Metternich, Prince, 262, 263
Minutolo, Marshal, 259
Miollis, General, 258
Money not earned, 73
Money-lenders and bankers, 47
Monte, Morello, 16
Montevarchi, da, Camillo, 196
Molza, Francesco Maria, 167, 196, 201
Moral directions, 71
Morali, Monsignore, 305
Morality, 40
Morality of merchants, 97
Morelli, Giovanni, 119
Moretti, Matteo, host, 247
*Morgincap*, 36
Morning, A, in Florence, 23
Morrocchesi, Antonio, 256
Mozzi, Teresa, 283
Murat, Joachim, 258, 259
Musicians and singers, 44
Muzio, Girolamo, 157, 167, 168, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 196, 197, 212, 213, 227, 228, 237
Mysticism and passion, 293

Naples, King of, 260
Napoleon, Emperor, 258, 263
Napoleonic code, 262
Napoleonic epoch, and its character, 291
Nardi, Gaetano, cook and chronicler, 269
Nardi, Jacopo, 196

Nari, Tiberio, 196
Necessaries of life, 65
Nencini, Pandolfini-, Eleonora, 284
Neri, Picciolino, 47
New men, 93
Niccolini, Gio, Battista, 298, 301, 302
Nita, 42
Noises without, 65
Nurses and artificial feeding, 67

Ochino, Bernardino, 169, 171, 196
Offences, 61
Or San Michele, 24
Orsini, Giordano, 196, 239

Paganism revived, 137
Palace of the Priori, 17
Palmieri, Matteo, 87
Panciatichi, Luisa and Margherita, 283
Pandolfini, Agnolo, 135
Panunzio, Maestro, physician, 247, 248, 249
Paolo di Ser Pace da Certaldo, 50, 56
Paolo Uccello, 93
Paternal government and morality, 292
Pazzi, de', Alfonso, 229
Penelope, Tullia's sister, 167, 222, 242, 244, 245
People's ascension, 32
Pepe, Gabriel, 298, 309
Pergola, theatre, 311
Peter, Leopold, and his reforms and government, 261
Piazza del Comune, 24
Picnic *suppers*, 280
Pier Damiani, 42
Pieri, Mario, 298, 299, 302
Pilgrims and wayfarers, 46
Pisani's roof, 268
Pitti, Buonaccorso, 123, 135
Pitti, Luca, 123
Pius VI., Pope, 258
Plagues, 119, 120, 121, 122
Pleasure companies, 46
Poerio, Giuseppe, 310
Poliziano, Agnolo, 133, 138
Pollajolo, Antonio, 138
Poniatoski, 289
Ponte Vecchio, place, 25
Porzio, Simone, 196
Practical advices, 72, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81
Priori's life, 94
Proverbs and sayings, 59
Public buildings in Florence, 85
Pucci, Antonio, 90, 101.

Razzi, Girolamo, 205
Reille, General, 258
Religious orders abolished, 262
Restorations and their effects, 292
Riccardiana Library, 55, 312
Ridolfi, Cosimo, 295, 297, 310
Rinuccini, Pier Francesco, 279, 280, 295, 310
Robberies, 26
Rocca Romana, Duke of, 260
Rogers, Samuel, 303
Romanticism and its effects, 291
Rospigliosi, Giuseppe, 254, 260
Rossi, de, Tribaldo, 139, 140
*Rota Veneris*, 41
Rucellai, Giovanni, 125, 126, 127, 129, 135
Rucellai and Medici marriage, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 132
Ruggieri, Gherardo, his epigrams, 309
Rustico di Filippo, 40

Sacchetti, Franco, 90, 93, 94, 103, 105, 110, 111, 115
St. John's Day, 273, 274, 275
Salome, 144
*Salons* of Florence, 277
Salutati, Benedetto, 138
Salvotti, Baron, 300
San Giorgio, a quarter, 29
San Miniato, 19
San Piero Scheraggio and its pulpit, 86
Santa Maria del Fiore, 17
Santa Reparata, Church of, 24
Savello, Giovambatista, 196, 238, 239
Savigny, F. C., 303

Savoy-Carignan, Charles Albert, 305, 306, 307
Savonarola, Girolamo, 114, 140
Ser Frulli, deceived by Bito, 28
Shelley, P. B., 303
Shop or warehouse, Establishing, 73
Shops of Florence, 269
Sismondi, J. C., 303
Slaves in Florentine families, 99
Soccebonel of Friuli, 94
Social relations, 70, 71
Soderini, Piero, 151
Sonaglini, Bartolo, 116
Sons, 69, 70
Speroni, Sperone, 167, 196, 201, 205
Spoliation of galleries and museums, 260
Stefani, Marchionne, 116
Stendhal, 276
Story-tellers, 92
Streets of ancient Florence, 36, 88
Strozzi, Filippo, 101, 133, 161, 162, 163, 164, 166, 168, 169, 196
Strozzi's palace founded, 139
Studies in Florence, 48
Stulz, London tailor, 300
Suburbs of Florence, 20, 21
Sumptuary laws, 107, 108, 109, 113, 114, 115, 231

TALENTI, Francesco, 86
Tasso, Bernardo, 167, 196, 201, 204
Tassoni, Minister of Beauharnais, 279
Taxations, 261
Tempi, Marchese, 283
Tenerani's "Psyche," 302
Textile fabrics, 47
Toledo, Eleonora, Duchess of Florence, 231, 234, 236, 237
Toledo, Pedro, son of Eleonora, 231, 234, 236
Tolomei, Claudio, 196
Tondi, Emilio, 196, 214
Torelli, Lelio, 235
Tornabuoni, Lucrezia, 133
Tosio, Count, 144
Tournaments and jousts, 138
Towers of Florence, 16
Town and country life under Ferdinand III., 277
*Trattato di Matrimonio*, by Muzio, 199
Tricks and jokes, 27
Trivulzio, Monsignore Antonio, 250
Tuscan idiom, 49

UBERTI dwellings, 25
Uccellatojo, 16
Ugolino, Count, 309
Umiliati friars, 47
Unknown writers, 58
Usury not a sin, 97

*Vacca*, The, the great bell, 86
Valois, de, Marie, 107
Vanozza, mother of the Duke Valentino, 151
Varchi, Benedetto, 195, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 228, 229, 230, 232, 233, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 243
Vecellio, Cesare, 210
Velluti, Donato, 117
Vengeance, 62
Vergerio, Pier Paolo, 227
Vettori, Francesco, 161, 167, 168
Victor Emmanuel, 307
Vienna Congress, 292
Vieusseux, Jean Pierre, 298, 299, 303
Views of ancient Florence, 86
Villani, Giovanni, 33
Volta, della, Simone, 196

WALLS, ancient, of Florence, 18
Walls of the third cincture, 85
Walls of the fourth circle, 267
Warnings, moral and religious, 60
William, London tailor, 300
Will, 73
Witte, Karl, 303
Wives, 68, 69
Women's condition in Florence, 68, 98

ZAFFETTA, a courtesan, 145
*Zara*, a game, 43

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